

THE
MUTABILITY
OF
HUMAN LIFE;
OR,
MEMOIRS
OF
ADELAIDE, Marchioness of MELVILLE.

By a LADY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON,
Printed for J. BEW, in Pater-Noster-Row.
1777.

*67-766 Vol. 3.

THE
M U T A B I L I T Y
O F
HUMAN LIFE, &c.

Mrs. MONT to Miss MEYNEL.

Howel-Wood.

DOUBT not one moment, my dear Harriot, of the unalterable affection of Lord Duncan: his affliction was very great when your escape was discovered; and, not being able to write himself, he employed his friend as an amanuensis; a copy of whose letter I enclose you.

VOL. III.

B

Ah!

Ah! Harriot, the surprize and consternation into which I was thrown by this news is past description. I wept in the sincerity of my soul at your unhappy destiny: though I still flatter myself it will be for a very short period. Lord and Lady Lorton will soon be sensible their son's heart is too firmly fixed on his cousin ever to be inconstant. Mrs. Gordon is in London, and I had the honour of hearing from her last night. She informs me Lord Duncan is quite melancholy, and, in defiance of his parents intreaties, takes not the least notice of Lady Emma when she comes there, who is rather affected at it, 'tis said. He intreated our friend to request of me, if I heard from you, to inform her, that at least he might hear of your health. She told him he must not flatter himself that I would inform him where you was,
if

if I was acquainted with the place. He said it would however give him great pleasure to find I knew the place of your residence, as he was certain I would further his happiness, and write in his favour, for that you and you only should be mistress of his heart.

With such proofs of his fidelity, my dear friend, I hope you will summon resolution: and, notwithstanding your disagreeable situation, which will undoubtedly be but of short duration, I beseech you to cherish your accustomed cheerfulness—I pray for your release. Ah! my dear Harriot, you cannot doubt, I am sure you cannot, of the very sincere friendship and inviolable affection of

Your own

ADELAIDE.

4 THE MUTABILITY OF

Miss MEYNEL to Mrs. MONT.

SImpleton that I am, ever since the receipt of your letter, I undergo continual anxiety, fearing my dear Charles will, by the force of his generous sympathy, bring himself into an ill state of health. Contrive somehow to inform him I am well, constant in my esteem for him, and happy as I can possibly be, absent from him: that will at least relieve him for the present; though I cannot hope for happier days in store. I relapse at periods to a state of despondence, fancy I shall hear of his being overcome by Lord and Lady Lorton's arguments, and that he will be lost to me for ever. Such is the state of absent lovers, Adelaide. Ridiculous!—Who would ever wish to be so situated? The hopes, fears,

fears, and various turns, of that same passion called *Love*, are certainly very absurd. I will weary you no more at present on that subject.

Mrs. Burton, who is housekeeper here, makes great and (according to her idea) laudable endeavours to make a convert of me. She informs me, that Mrs. Harpur, herself, and their holy teacher, Brother Cantwell, are continually on their knees on my behalf, that I may become a partaker of the New Birth. My tongue being at all times too glib, I told her that a New Lover would be more acceptable, as I should then be in hopes of his releasing me from my prison-house.

“ Oh ! Lord, Miss,” said she, shrugging up her shoulders, “ what profaneness !”

6 THE MUTABILITY OF

“ Why, my dear Burton,” returned I, cajoling her, “ a woman of your sense, I am certain, can never seriously imbibe the folly of such doctrine.”

“ Folly, Miss !—God blefs me !”

“ Nay, don’t cross yourself, dear Burton: though it would not surprise me much to behold you in that attitude, for Methodism is nearly allied to Popery.”

“ Aye, aye, Miss, you may insult our happy sect, and compare it to what you please,” returned she; “ but I would have you to know we scorn to worship saints and images.”

“ Nay, my dear Burton, do you not adore Cantwell, your living Saint, and
worship

worship the portrait of the ever-to-be-lamented Whitfield?"

"We undoubtedly, Miss, revere the memory of that holy man, who was our introducer into the regions of bliss," said she, "and shall ever pay honour to his doctrine, which assures us of unspeakable happiness"—

"Independent of moral actions," interrupted your pert friend.

"Lord! Miss, you must excuse my telling you that you talk very simply," said she—"Moral actions! Why moral actions will always follow the faith we profess."

"Is murder a moral action?" returned I, laughing at her affected piety.

8 THE MUTABILITY OF

“Why, no, Miss,” returned she, lowering her voice—“but faith, you know”——

“I know that a sincere repentance, with faith, will obliterate crimes, Burton; but you know the two prisoners at —— refused to repent, or confess their crimes to the ministers who attended them, though the murder they committed was plainly proved. They even went to the gallows with a lie in their mouths, and announced that they perceived Heaven’s gates open to them. Such is the baneful doctrine of predestination. The professors of it rush headlong into eternity, with all their imperfections on their heads, and a train of unrepented crimes which Heaven hath denounced vengeance against. Listen to me, Burton: Why, if Omnipotence resolved

solved to form some mortals to happiness, others to eternal misery (a thought injurious to his attribute of mercy), is vengeance denounced against sin? If some unhappy wretches are doomed to misery, spite of their virtue, where the reward of their combat against vice? for vice is inherent in us undoubtedly, and without combating against it, and invoking the grace of God, it would certainly prevail. The Scripture assures us, that by our works we are to receive sentence from the Book of Life, in that tremendous day when the secrets of all hearts shall be opened. Faith undoubtedly must be joined to our works, my dear Burton—we must depend on neither alone.”

“Aye, Miss, but you know Paul says, vessels to honour and dishonour, &c.”

B 5

“Very

“ Very true, Mrs. Burton ; but, if you recollect, St. Peter says, in his Epistle, that his brother Paul wrote some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

“ Aye, aye, Miss, it is you, who have not the true saving faith, that wrest it to your own destruction—I am sorry for you—I pity you”——said she, again shrugging up her shoulders;——“ but you really are, I find, in a state of reprobation, my dear and worthy mistress. Our holy brother Cantwell, and all our brethren on earth, can never, I fear, save you from damnation”——

“ What is that you are saying ?” cried Dame Harpur, entering the room.

“ She

“ She has only been pronouncing an anathema against me, Madam, and sending me to a strange region and country I have no desire of entering into,” said I, laughing.

Burton coloured, and recited what had passed with acrimony.

“ Upon my word, Miss Meynel, you are much to blame,” said the old dame.

“ Indeed, Madam,” added I, “ instead of being in a state of reprobation, I think myself in a state of grace. I am born in sin, ’tis true—prone to errors—I acknowledge my faults to my Creator, and believe, by my repentance, through the mercy of God, he erases them. Scripture convinces me so. If you would give yourself the trouble,

12 THE MUTABILITY OF

Mrs. Harpur, to inspect a little further into it, instead of the Journals, visions, &c. of your Saint Whitfield, I think you would be convinced your present opinion is falsely founded."

"Oh! monstrous!" exclaimed they both together.

In short, my dear Adelaide, they both grew so vociferous, that I was necessitated to stop my ears, that I might hear no more of their reproaches for my free discovery of the abhorrence I held their tenets in.

So very gloomily situated, I took the liberty to write to Lady Lorton, intreating her to send me some books to alleviate the dismal hours she had allotted me—that, being placed among such enthusiasts,

enthusiasts, without some amusement I should become a prey to despair. Since my commencement of this epistle I have received one from her, written very affectionately, assuring me nothing but her son's welfare should make her use me with such apparent cruelty. With this letter she sent me a number of books, on various subjects, and a letter to Mrs. Harpur, desiring her not to persecute me on account of religion; at which that pious lady lifted up her eyes, and wondered at the profligacy of this age.

Adieu! Adelaide; be not silent, out of compassion to your dolefully-situated friend

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

Miss

Miss MEYNEL to Mrs. MONT.

LUcrative motives have disrobed Burton of her sanctity and enthusiasm. In a month's time she quits Dame Harpur. This miracle was caused by a visit from Mrs. A——. Mrs. Harpur not being able to walk, and I not permitted private conversation with a stranger, Burton was ordered to perambulate with her in the gardens, &c. At which time, by her skill in detraction, she so ingratiated herself in the favour of Mrs. A——, that the said lady offered her double wages, and other rewards, if she would quit Mrs. Harpur, and live with her. They settled it on the spot, to both their satisfactions, and entered the house again with the unwelcome news of their negotiation to my duenna. Dreadful reproaches

proaches ensued—Mrs. A—— took her leave—and Burton, shrugging up her shoulders, thanks Heaven she is soon to follow.



Hearing a rustling noise in my dressing-room, I started up, and ran thither, where I found Burton eagerly perusing a new novel Lady Lorton had sent me. By way of forcing her opinion, “Isn’t that a delightful book, Burton?” said I; “you are welcome to the perusal of it.”

“Thanks, Miss,” returned she, with joy in her countenance; “indeed, from what I have seen of it, I like it much; these books are very entertaining—very instructive.”

“Equally so with Whitfield’s Journals,”

nals," said I, by way of fathoming her, with an added smile.

"Why, to be sure, Miss," said she, with her usual shrug, "Mrs. Harpur is too bigotted—She almost converted me.—Superiors, you know, have great influence over one. I often thought her wrong, but I said nothing—No, I said nothing," said she, turning her eyes to the corners, and seemingly applauding her own dissimulation.

"You have undergone a great many trials, Mrs. Burton, I suppose, during your life," said I gravely, as if out of compassion to her.

"Trials! Miss; aye, aye; but what signifies boasting of them? I have seen a great deal indeed."

"Have

“Have you travelled much, Mrs. Burton? I suppose this country is not your native place.”

“No; it is not, Miss. Wales was the place of my birth; but marrying unfortunately at Ludlow, my perfidious husband deserted me. Thus reduced, I was obliged to stoop to servitude.”

She was prevented pursuing her narrative by a summons from Mrs. Harpur, and left me in wonderful suspense; for by the description you gave of Fluellen, it must be she. However, the gratification of your curiosity must be suspended till my next.

How is my dear Duncan's health?
Heigho! Are we never to meet again?
Is Lady Emma triumphant? Say something

18. THE MUTABILITY OF

thing of him, however grating it may be to my vanity, and continue to love your

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

Mrs. MONT to Miss MEYNEL.

Howel-Wood.

I AM very happy to find my amiable friend, in the midst of her affliction, retains her vivacity. Heaven, my Harriot, will soon interpose in your favour. A letter from the worthy Mrs. Gordon informs me, that your lover, impatient at his parents endeavours to tear your image from his memory, has himself informed Lady Emma he never will be sacredly united to any other woman than his lovely cousin. He further informed Mrs. Gordon, his intention was to write
and

and intreat the favour of me to know the place of your banishment. She solemnly assured him I was ignorant where it was. He then insisted upon knowing where my letters to you were directed; in that point she gratified his Lordship. I suppose Love will soon assist him to discover the place of your retreat. It is unnecessary, I hope, my dear friend, to caution you against a clandestine marriage, as your own generous sentiments, and obligations to Lady Lorton, will overthrow all his Lordship's arguments in favour of such a proceeding. Perseverance in your duty will in the end reward you, my dear friend; and I cannot help flattering myself time will reconcile their son's choice, and give you to *him* who is worthy of you.

If it proves in reality that Burton is
the

the despicable Fluellen, I shall be happy to hear that she is removed from Mrs. Harpur. She is a dangerous invader of private peace, wherever she goes. Adieu to her.

More news for you, my dear Harriot: the day preceding that in which Mrs. Gordon wrote, Lady Di Horton was indissolubly tied to a Count Lanore, the man whose name you could not remember.

Spring approaches, with her usual loveliness. What grateful ideas to Providence does it not awake in one's breast? It is impossible for a real atheist, I think, to exist amidst such a cluster of surrounding evidences of a kind, a benevolent, and a powerful Deity.

Let

Let but the atheist Nature's works explore,
Soon he'll recant, in them a God adore.

Could blind Chance cause such order
and beauty? Impossible!

The post is setting out, and I must
bid you hastily adieu.

ADELAIDE.

Miss MEYNEL to Mrs. MONT.

AN exoptation of revenge is to derogate from humanity and the finer feelings, therefore it shall never be indulged in the breast of your Harriot: but this old vixen Burton, or rather Fluellen, most certainly should receive a treatment similar to that she bestows on others. She has been disappointed in her hopes of attending Mrs. A——, therefore

22 THE MUTABILITY OF

therefore has vented her spleen in my disfavour to ingratiate herself again in the esteem of Mrs. Harpur. Mrs. A—— by some means had information of her behaviour in Wales, therefore wrote to inform her she should forego all thoughts of her in the capacity she had before agreed to.

Burton, enraged, complained vehemently to Dame Harpur, and said she was persecuted on account of her perseverance to the true Gospel-faith, and that I had treated her very ill on the same score—offered her profane novels to read, and upon her refusal declared I would assert the contrary to her mistress; with a great deal more malevolence not worth repeating. Mrs. Harpur gave credit to her sister in the Lord, and refused to hear my defence: but to recompence
the

the grief I underwent, your letter arrived. I coincide, my dear Adelaide, in your opinion of a clandestine marriage. The proofs of my Charles's affection will enable me to undergo my tortures with more fortitude. But why do I mention tortures, and boast of fortitude, to you, who have such a superiority over me in that point. Have you not undergone, with the most unexampled patience, afflictions which would deprive me of reason?—I despise myself for complaining.

Pray, if possible, amuse me with a farther account of the Countess Lanore, who, from receiving such mortifying coolness from Lord Villars, threw herself, by way of consolation, into the arms of this foreigner.

When

24 THE MUTABILITY OF

When, my dear Adelaide, shall we embrace each other? Alas! Destiny diverts herself at our expence, and tosses us about in a strange manner.

Adieu!

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

Mrs. GORDON to Miss MEYNEL.

London.

STRANGE events have happened, my dear Miss Meynel. Your beloved friend is now acknowledged Marchioness of Melville, and the poor unhappy Marquis expired last night. Her relations now surround her: but, notwithstanding their attention to her, and endeavours of amendment for their past cruelty, she feels too sensibly for her unnatural

natural husband's death. When capable of taking pen in hand, she will herself inform you of particulars, which I am certain will be much more pleasing and satisfactory to you than to hear it from me. I remain

My dear Miss Meynel's
most affectionate

SARAH GORDON.

*The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Miss
MEYNEL.*

HOW surprising, how wonderful, are the dispensations of Providence! By sudden and melancholy effects it has restored my lost fame, my fortune, and my friends: yet, while paying the rightful tribute of gratitude to Heaven

VOL. III.

C

for

26 THE MUTABILITY OF

for this bounty, my heart melts with affliction for the early fate of my poor unfortunate Melville, who fell a victim to his unhappy passion for the abandoned Violetta. Those who are unacquainted with my disposition may perhaps laugh at the concern I cannot help visibly shewing, and think me a hypocrite for mourning after a man who once used me so ill: but repentance with me obliterates all unkindness; and I sincerely wish it had been in my power to prolong his life, that, by a longer repentance, he might have rendered himself still more acceptable to his Maker. He was my husband—His tenderness returned—I esteemed him the same.

I was rambling with Mrs. Hall in Howel-Wood, when a servant on horseback approached us, and, alighting, delivered

livered me a letter. Surprised, I demanded to whom he belonged, when he answered, "The Marquis of Melville." I was struck dumb with astonishment—Mrs. Hall stared at remarking my confusion—when the fellow continued, "the Marquis is dangerously ill, Madam, as that letter will inform you." His introduction gave me great perturbation of spirits, and made me guess something dreadful was to follow. Mrs. Hall, observing my situation, presented her smelling-bottle; after which I made shift to peruse the letter, which was from my aunt Walters, as follows:

"*Ma tres chere Dame,*

"IT affords me *grand plaisir* that I have again the happiness of acknowledging you for my niece, and that your virtue and merit is rewarded, *par justice*,

according to its desert. *Une triste evenement* has caused this alteration in the unfortunate Marquis, who has already acknowledged you for his lawful wife, and produced the certificate, drawn by Mr. Foster, which he had not destroyed; and so, *faire une compensation*, a will is now making, in case of his demise, to settle on you, and your heirs, for ever, two thousand a year, and twenty thousand pounds in cash. I at the same time condole and congratulate you. Annette will attend you in the Marquis's carriage, and assure you of other particulars. I remain,

“ *Ma tres chere niece,*

“ *Toujours les votres,*

“ J. WALTERS.”

You perceive, by the above epistle, my dear Harriot, that my aunt has imbibed

bibed all the frippery of the French nation, and is an enemy to feeling and dismal sensations. Her letter was not at all calculated to dissipate my affliction and surprize. To save myself the trouble of unfolding the mystery to Mrs. Hall, I would have shewn her the letter, but the mixed language it was written in would have made it to her unintelligible; therefore, in walking back to the house, I made shift to inform her who I really was. The good-natured creature, it seems, had heard my history, though she little imagined I was the person. She did all in her power to comfort me and raise my spirits. Soon after we entered the house, Annette arrived, and shed tears of joy at the sight of me. "Ah! my dear lady," said she, "at last you are found—Indeed I never more will part with you—Why did you cruelly forsake me,"

continued she, "and not permit me to follow you in every change of your fortune?"

I returned her many thanks for her tenderness, but informed her in my wandering state it would not have been possible.

"Well, my dear lady," said she, "no time is to be lost; my poor master is impatiently expecting you; therefore let me pack up what trifling things you want at present, and I will inform your Ladyship of particulars on our journey."

I followed her advice, but made her take some refreshment first. Mrs. Hall insisted upon my taking some likewise before I departed. The tears fell on my taking leave: though she said she hoped my happiness was at hand.

Soon as we were seated in the chaise, Annette gave me the melancholy recital, and informed me, that the Marquis being in a violent dispute with Violetta, that furious woman ran to a closet within her bedchamber, where a poignard, richly ornamented, belonging to her late husband, hung, and snatching it off the hook, unsheathed it—She hastily returned, and, concealing the weapon, before he was aware, plunged it into his body, crying, “Receive the recompence of your insolence.” Her friend, Madame St. Clare, being in the next room, heard the Marquis groan, and her last words; upon which she immediately ran to them, and found him dropped on the bed, fainting, and his blood issuing like a torrent from the wound. She shrieked out, and rung the bell—Servants came, and immediately fetched some of the

most eminent surgeons, who examined his wound, and found it was mortal, and he could live but a few days at most. When the victim returned to his senses, he desired that Violetta might be secured as his murderers, confessed to the surgeons and people present that she was not his lawful wife, for that *Adelaide Belmont* only had a right to that title, and desired my relations might be sent for, that he might clear my innocence, and acknowledge his own guilt, before his death, as some recompence. Accordingly, Lord and Lady Walters, the Duke of —, and my other friends, attended. Count St. Lou was likewise sent for, who declared the truth of having been put into my bedchamber, &c. Proper measures were taken to convince the world of my innocence, and a will formed in my favour: but he was very
unhappy

unhappy at not knowing where I was, that he might once more see me, and intreat forgiveness. This strange news soon spread, and arrived to the hearing of my worthy friend Mrs. Gordon, who immediately sent to inform Lady Walters of my address. She communicated the welcome intelligence to my poor Melville, who instantly sent for me. In the mean time, Violetta, finding her character destroyed, and her crime of murder detected, swallowed a draught that soon put a period to her life. Thus ended Annette's dreadful intelligence.

We travelled hard, and I arrived at London much fatigued, dispirited, and unfit for the scene I was soon to undergo. Lady Walters received me, "Ah! my dear niece," said she, "forgive me, forgive me!—I was deceived as to your

34 THE MUTABILITY OF

supposed guilt; but take courage, the poor Marquis is dying. How fortunate it is he acknowledges you in these solemn moments for his lawful wife—You will now be restored to every thing you wish—*Mais mon Dieu!* how I run on, and forget it's necessary for you to take something after your fatigue—Do, *madame* Lady Melville, be seated—By degrees we must inform the Marquis of your arrival.”

Some wine, cakes, &c. were handed to me, while I sat astonished at her strange inattention to so melancholy an event. I begged Annette not to leave me. At last I was summoned to my poor unfortunate Melville. To express the grief I felt when I beheld him is impossible.

“Can you forgive me, sweet Adelaide,

laide, for my past cruelty and injustice?" said he, in a faint voice.

"My dear Melville," returned I, kissing his hand, and bathing it with my tears, "term it not so harshly—it was the fickleness of youth—most sincerely do I forget every thing past, and wish you as fervently your health as I wish myself happiness after my long sufferings."

"You are too angelic," said he, embracing me—"How could I ever forsake such goodness?—Oh! I am all torture at the reflection that I could abandon you—I have deservedly received my death from the wretch who seduced me—Can you forgive me?—Alas! Harriot, you must excuse my relating the particulars of this dreadful interview,

36 THE MUTABILITY OF

and the truly distressing ones that succeeded." My heart was torn past recording. He would embrace me, ask forgiveness, then fall into delirious faintings, which in two days closed his poor unfortunate life.



Mrs. Gordon attended me both before his death and after it.—My innocence is cleared—my honour is restored.

Madame St. Clare, the friend of Violetta, sent several times to enquire after my health, and hoped I would not take it amiss for being so impertinent to trouble me at such a time, although she had been once the friend of my enemy, but that she had a real esteem for me, and hoped before she quitted England I would permit her to wait on me, as she had

had something particular to communicate.

Such a message surprized me much—My friends surrounded me, and endeavoured to soothe me—I became more composed; and a few days since, by the advice of my dear Mrs. Gordon, sent Madame St. Clare word that I would receive her whenever she pleased; tho' you may guess the idea of receiving a person once a friend to the wicked Violetta! Her answer was, that she would attend me, but intreated I would receive her alone. Such a request was very singular; I imparted it to Mrs. Gordon, who persisted that I should not, for she would remain with me. I must own my spirits were much depressed; I had fears myself concerning her intention. The appointed time arrived, Mrs. Gordon with

with me, when the name of Madame St. Clare was announced ; a lady in deep mourning entered, and displayed the well-known features of my old acquaintance and foe Mademoiselle Albe.—Her face was pale as death—her looks denoted horror and distraction.

“ Is it possible ? Do I really see Mademoiselle Albe ? ” said I.

“ You do, much-wronged friend,” returned she—“ I will not further injure you—Will you not trust yourself alone with me ?—Yet, alas ! I deserve the most cruel suspicions you can form of me ! ”

“ This friend, Madam,” said I, “ is acquainted with all *my* concerns ; but if you have any thing relating to yourself to communicate, which you chuse she should

should not hear, I will intreat her to retire."

"Oh, no, no," answered she, with wildness, "it is time my guilt should be displayed to the world in its proper colours. I am going to quit England, and retire to a nunnery for life: but resolved, before my departure, to acquaint you with my own and my infamous friend Violetta's history. That done—your forgiveness bestowed on an unhappy wretch—I quit the world for ever."

She seated herself on a couch by me, and began as follows:

"A disposition to coquetry is certainly peculiarly innate to some more than others; at least I judge so from myself, as I recollect that I was inclined to that
vice

vice at a very early period. I was fond of admiration, and, alas! unhappily became too soon my own mistress. Several lovers became slaves to my charms at Montpellier; I deluded them by turns with hopes which I never intended to fulfil; was gay, fluttering, and mistress of my heart, till the Marquis of Melville arrived: to him Fate determined I should surrender. I made use of all my arts to ensnare him; common gallantry was all I received in return for my heart; and your arrival put a period to the hope I had imbibed of being able in time to subdue him. However, my passion for him being so violent, I determined to miss no opportunity of being in his dear company, though it was frequent stabs to my soul to perceive his assiduity to you. I tormented you with my company, for the Marquis's sake, tho' I knew
it

it was disagreeable to you both. However, I kept my lovers as usual, by way of cordial for the anxiety I underwent on the Marquis's account. The news then was spread of his intended departure for Nice, which drove me almost distracted, and from my extreme perturbation of mind caused a fever, in which you know I was so imprudent as to intreat him to attend me, which he, as I then thought, cruelly refused. You came—It is needless to recite the conversation that ensued. My pride, jealousy, &c. drove me to desperation almost, but in my cooler moments I could not help approving your advice of trying the effects of absence, and the gay amusements of Paris, though I had very little hope of being the better for it. I could not resolve to go, and kept house till after your departure to Nice. I
then

42 THE MUTABILITY OF

then went to Madame D'Oran's, to endeavour to discover where you was gone, but could not. However, chance brought me acquainted with it, and I wrote an anonymous letter to Mr. Ancram, in hopes of his preventing the Marquis marrying you, but soon after had the extreme mortification to hear the old gentleman was dead, and your marriage consummated. I ran to Madame D'Oran's, where I had the news confirmed, and in that moment of fury vowed revenge on you both, which I determined if possible to put in practice, as a compensation for the insult he had paid to my slighted charms. I immediately went to Paris, and there got acquainted with Violetta. Her vivacity charmed me: we formed a friendship. She came in laughing one day, 'Albe, I have a rare scheme of preferment for you,' said she, 'it has
just

just entered my head—Will you venture to marry an old man, who I am certain cannot live above half a year? and you then will be mistress of 3000 *louis d'ors* a year for life.’ “ I should be mad to refuse such a settlement,” said I, “ if I could get it; the only man I loved is married, therefore now I don’t care what sort of wretch I have for a husband, so he has wealth.” ‘ Charming girl!’ returned she; ‘ quite to my mind; for, faith, Albe, it is love unrestrained I am for, not dull matrimonial flames—A husband is only of use to preserve one’s reputation. I lured Guadicci to marry me, for the sake of his wealth; after which I had lovers in plenty. He entertained them, and soon complaisantly took his departure to the territory of worms, to my inexpressible joy; for I began to be heartily weary of dissembling

bling

44 THE MUTABILITY OF

bling affection for him. Here I have found none worthy of bartering my liberty for, therefore will range like the bee.—But to the purpose, my dear Albe; this old Monsieur St. Clare was husband to a sister of Guadicci's, whom he buried some years since. He saw you at my house once, and seems to admire you vastly. This morning he spoke of you in high terms, which made this thought pop into my head. He is near 80, therefore if you can endure him for a few months, do, my dear Albe, for your own sake; we may take our pleasure, and leave him to nap in the chimney corner.' "The libertinism she had displayed in her conversation did not altogether please me; though so inclined to coquetry and admiration, I was not in fact criminal. However, the offer she had made me caused me to drop further reflection

reflection on her conduct, and I readily entered into the scheme she had planned for me of becoming St. Clare's wife. That very afternoon I was invited to meet him at her house, and by all the art I was mistress of strove to heighten the affection he had begun to entertain for me. He departed very happy—He begged to visit me—I complied—In a week's time we were married; a fortnight after which he was taken off in an apoplexy, and left me a rich widow, and my liberty. Melville still adhered to my heart—I resolved, if possible, to revenge myself on him and you. Soon after, you both arrived at Paris. Violetta informed me of it. To keep up appearances, I went not into public. She said the Marquis was the most enchanting creature she had ever seen, and that she would put herself in his way, if possible,

to

46 THE MUTABILITY OF

to have the glory of leading him in her chains, and mortify that wretch his wife, with her trifling beauty. It was a charming opportunity, I thought, to execute my revenge on *you* at least, therefore resolved if possible to assist her on with her design. My dear Violetta, returned I, the very great obligation you have conferred on me, by putting so splendid a fortune in my possession, will make me always your friend. I have had a slight acquaintance with the Marquis at Montpelier, as he frequently visited a family I did there, at the time he was addressing Miss Belmont. The way you must engage him is by a seeming inattention to him, and affected modesty. It was said that was the scheme she practised to entrap him." 'Thanks, my dear St. Clare,' said she; 'never fear my acting my part well. I have a spy over him, and

and find he is to be at the opera to-night with some of his countrymen. Lady Melville stays at home with her aunt, who is indisposed; therefore I shall have a good opportunity of displaying myself, for I have contrived it so as to sit in the next box with Madame Larone.' She followed her concerted plan, and came to sup with me in raptures of joy. 'I have played my part well, St. Clare,' said she; 'I turned my eyes frequently on Melville, with all the languidness I could possibly throw into them: upon his eyes meeting mine, I as hastily withdrew them, with a forced blush. He observed it, and by help of one of his friends got himself introduced to Madame Larone, who, not being averse to gallantry, saw what was going forward, and invited him to stay in her box. I spoke little—but the dumb eloquence continued.

48 THE MUTABILITY OF

continued. He paid me several compliments, sighed much, and pressed my hand when he led me to my chair, at which I affected to be surprised, and half angry. Thus, my dear St. Clare, ended our interview this evening. Oh ! he is an enchanting creature, worth all the pains I take to gain him. Confound that syren his wife ! Had he not been married, I might have been the envy of the world. But let me consider, St. Clare ; you say they were married privately—no witnesses—and the old parson is dead——’Pon honour !’

“ I found what she was about.—Aye, my dear Violetta, said I, it may not be impossible to effect what you are thinking of, if you persevere in resistance to his wishes.”——‘ Very true,’ returned she ; ‘ at least I’ll endeavour it, for he
is

is worth fixing for life. The loss of him would drive me to desperation—I could not support it.’ Thus encouraged, she fixed the resolution of striving to execute her design. They met frequently at Madame Larone’s; after which he visited her at her own house; but I took particular care always to retire before his arrival. You may, perhaps, wonder that I did not strive to gain him for myself—I had found it impossible, and thought that by assisting him to gain Violetta I should in the end be assured of his gratitude and friendship, which might at last arise to desire. Such were my sentiments then. I found by her his passion soon arrived to a violent height; and, that he might not betray my past conduct to this infamous woman, sent for him one day to my house, as if unknown to her; that I had something particular

50 THE MUTABILITY OF

to communicate to him. He had often heard my new name from her, and she told him he was under obligation to me for speaking in his favour, therefore he immediately complied with my request, and was extremely astonished to find in Madame St. Clare his old persecutress. I told him that absence had cured me of a passion for him that was very ill-founded, and, in recompence for the trouble I had given him, I had done all in my power to make Violetta listen to his suit, for which I hoped he would conceal the imprudent behaviour I had practised at Montpelier; for as Madame Guadicci was strictly virtuous, if she knew I had acted so imprudently, she would forego my friendship; that I sincerely wished them both happiness, and was sorry it was now out of his power to make himself so, as he could not marry my beautiful

tiful friend, now he had owned his marriage to Miss Belmont's relations."

"Ah! but my dear Miss Albe—Madame St. Clare, I mean—I may disown it.—I will see if Adelaide——If not, stratagem must succeed."

"Aye, you may try," returned I; "but don't betray my past folly."

"No, my dear St. Clare; your present kindness obliterates it from my memory. Adorable Violetta! She must be mine."

"He departed, promising not to discover to Madame Guaducci it was him I had been in love with. After that, he frequently called on me, and I met him at Violetta's. He behaved as a friend;

told me of his hinting to you he loved another, and his proposal, which you would not listen to. Since you would not consent, he said, he would concert a scheme to put St. Lou in possession of you, if he could get Violetta to promise to marry him when he disengaged himself. With seeming reluctance she complied, and you suffered the completion of his hellish plot in London. When freed from you, he married Violetta. I asked him if he had permitted the Count to gratify his passion? He changed colour, and said, 'No, he had taken care you should not be prostituted but by your own consent.' Upon which I laughed; for though I had not parted with my virtue, I thought but lightly of it then, as Violetta had instilled her principles into me. When they came to England, I came likewise, and hired a
house

house for myself, striving all the time to make the Marquis in turn become captive to me. I got intimate with Lady Di Horton, whom I had formerly known at Montpelier. She fell in love with Lord Villars, and finding he was gone to Wales pursued him there to Mr. Shenkin's: from thence she informed me of her success or disappointment. In the mean time, the violence of Violetta's natural temper began to appear. She continued to doat on Melville, but was jealous of him to distraction. By way of consolation, he used frequently to call of me, and complain of her injustice and tyranny. I humoured him—pitied him—In short, friendship made him at last discover charms in me he had never observed before. My house, when he knew she was safe in company, was his place of refuge; and, by yielding

to his criminal desires, I became his fixed friend, as I never upbraided him if I saw him pay attention to any other woman: Violetta had taught me art. I wrote to Lady Di that I had my love returned, but did not chuse to discover his name on paper. She was disappointed of her design on Villars, and came to London. I then entrusted her with the secret; and she, to conceal me from the wrath of Violetta, permitted us to meet at her house, that by that means Violetta might suspect her rather than me. The Marquis likewise would often commend her beauty before Violetta, to deceive her; and she would immediately curse her in the most dreadful manner. Lady Di concerted that scheme which Nugent executed on you—then, to make you appear more infamous, that Lord Villars might despise you, put you into Count St.

St. Lou's power. Suddenly there appeared a Count Lanore, a handsome fellow, who paid his addressee to her. She was charmed with him; and, without enquiring into his character, was so foolish as to marry him. I was a few days after sitting in Violetta's dressing-room, and she was in her bedchamber, when the Marquis, after paying his compliments, passed through to her room. They were continually disputing, and he was so heartily weary of her, that he began to repent having sacrificed you to her, as you would have borne his infidelities with patience. The report of your supposed innocence spread, and enraged her still more. But to return. 'Violetta,' said he, 'have you heard the news?'—'What?' said she.—'Poor Lady Di Horton—Blast the villain!—An impostor has married her, and conveyed

her by force to a seat she has in Cornwall, where she must end her wretched days, if some lover does not relieve her—So charming a creature to be sacrificed’——

‘D—mnation to her charms,’ said Violetta; ‘it was my revenge caused her punishment. Dare she vie with me in beauty?’

‘Your punishment, then, shall succeed, infamous woman,’ said the Marquis. ‘My lawful wife, Adelaide Belmont, shall put in her claim; a friend of mine, who has the certificate of our marriage, shall seek her out, and make her prove it. Her goodness will pardon me. Different from thee as Heaven from Hell.’

‘Furies

‘Furies assist me!’ said the enraged Italian; ‘Is this to be borne?’ So saying, she instantly fled to her closet, and hastily returned with a poignard, which she plunged into his side. His groans alarmed me. When I entered, he was weltering in his blood. His condition scarce gave me power to call for assistance, I was so terrified and afflicted for him. At last the servants attended. He desired she might be secured, and said in a low voice to me, ‘It is all over with me, St. Clare; repent; you see Justice overtakes us. My Adelaide, that angel of light, shall have her innocence cleared. Retire.’

“I was going with heart-felt agonies, without taking further notice of Violetta, who was now become an object of horror to me by her cruelty, when she

called me back : ‘ St. Clare,’ said she, with rage still strongly impressed on her countenance, ‘ one moment turn back—hearken to the few words I have to utter. I suppose these fellows will permit me to speak to you in private before I am further tormented.’ They answered, Yes; but they must first inspect the place, to see there was no dangerous instrument. Upon finding none, they permitted us to enter, and left us alone.

“ I was just going to reprove her for the rash deed she had been guilty of, when she prevented me by speaking first. ‘ I have compleated my revenge, St. Clare, as an affronted woman should—at least an Italian—I boast and glory in the noble custom of our country. Yes, dear as Melville was to me once, his neglect of me lately intirely dislodged it; hatred

hatred succeeded, and revenge likewise—glorious revenge!—I have completed it on that forcerefs Lady Di Horton. To you, St. Clare, I have often repeated my intrigues—The feigned Lanore was once an object of my fondest wishes—I gratified them—His wit and dexterity procured him the livelihood of a gentleman—By fools adventuring their patrimony on dice, he kept up appearances. My love eradicated, a friendship succeeded from his kind behaviour and resisting upbraiding. I made him several handsome presents while at Paris, to support him: he gratefully returned me thanks for it, and was of service by getting into company with Melville, and heightening his passion for me by an exaggeration of my charms. I told you not of him, as it was unnecessary. When I perceived Melville's love for me slack-

en, I watched the cause, and found out his frequent visits to Lady Di. To remove her, and assist the feigned Lanore to a good fortune, I invited him hither. I knew that his beauty and alluring manner would soon be able to overcome her indifference, and that his gratitude to me would make him comply with my desire, which was, if he got her into possession, that he would remove her to Cornwall, and confine her for life. He promised—came to England, and took the name of Lanore—soon got acquainted with Lord B— at a gaming-table, in whose house he met Lady Di Horton. She became charmed with him, and they were married. Thus, St. Clare, you see, I compleated my revenge on her and Melville. But his daring to insult me with recalling his Adelaide compleated the scene—Himself is a sacrifice—May horrors blast him

him in his last moments ! As for myself, I shall quit life with pleasure : a wise father taught me that systems of religion were only the bugbear of fools, Heaven and Hell a mere joke : it has been my firm persuasion. I have pursued pleasure to have a free range. For that purpose I bestowed laudanum on my hated husband Guadicci, and sent him out of pain to annihilation—By a more public manner I have revenged myself on Melville—But I am now weary of the farce of life—I wish to be nothing.

“ Good God !” exclaimed I, notwithstanding my past guilt, “ is it possible such a wretch can exist !—Holy Virgin, defend me !”

‘ Wretch not me,’ returned she—
‘ Does not your religion teach you to
assist

assist the afflicted?—But I see 'tis myself that must move for succour—Oh! I shall faint.'——

“ So saying, she reached a small vial from a drawer in a cabinet, and taking a water-glass, with some water in it, intirely emptied the drops.”

‘ This will relieve my present perturbation,’ said she.

“ I wish it may assist you to repent of your crimes,” said I, “ which years of penitence can hardly expiate.”

‘ Fool!’ interrupted she, ‘ two hours is the utmost I can exist. Did you think I would be the timid, silly fool, to suffer myself to be arraigned for murder? No—My confession was for thy benefit,

benefit, to teach thee how to live, and how to die.—Distraction!—Oh! I am on the rack.

“ I immediately rung the bell, and in the next room had scarce strength to tell what this infamous woman had done,—that assistance might be directly applied for.—When I returned to her she was in extreme agonies—the horrors of conscience arose—“ Ah !” said she, quite frantic,—“ truth beams upon me in this dreadful instant—my father deceived me!—Oh, horror! must I become the victim of his false principles? Distraction!—’tis you have killed me! O tortures!—whither am I going, St. Clare?—there is a hell---I feel it already---hark!---Guadicci!-----O Melville!” She fell into strong convulsions, and fainted. I retired, shocked beyond
expres-

expression, into the next room ;---in a few moments she expired.

“ The Marquis was on the bed in great agony and pain. My soul was in tortures. On my knees I entreated his pardon for alluring him to my arms, and being the means of his becoming possessed of the woman who was his murderess ; he was so compassionate as to seal my pardon, and persuade me to pass the remainder of my days in penitence, adding, he sincerely pitied me.

“ I retired to my house with anguish inexpressible—immediately sent for a priest, and confessed my guilty history, who told me the only way to make my peace with heaven, was to make restitution, if possible, to you, and devote

vote the remainder of my life to penitence and prayer, taking the holy vow. His advice I approved, it was rational. Father P—— is not one of those mercenary priests which our religion are too frequently disgraced by ; I therefore enquired after you under my unknown name, and at last obtained permission to acknowledge my crime, and intreat your forgiveness : will you seal it, Madam, by accepting these papers,” said she, (in which she presented me half her fortune.) She wept much at my refusal—called me extremely cruel ; but I told her it would afford me greater pleasure, if she would bestow it on Monsieur St. Clare’s relations, as I now had, thank God, sufficient for myself ; that I sincerely forgave her, and should be glad to hear from the Convent she went to, that her peace of mind was restored.

restored. As she had none of those very dreadful crimes to answer for, that Violetta was guilty of, I doubted not but repentance would conciliate her to heaven, as she was awake to her errors. She continued to weep exceedingly,—at last drew a miniature of the unhappy Marquis, set with diamonds, from her pocket. “At least, Madam,” said she, “receive this, if it is only to diminish my guilt: as I am now going to be devoted to a holy spouse, all remembrance of this once loved object must be erased, and your goodness present to my memory. If my prayers can prevail,—if the prayers of such a wretch have any efficacy, you will be completely happy. Alas! how unhappy was my fate to meet with Violetta, for tho’ she could not, nor indeed did, much attempt to destroy my system of faith, yet she
instilled

instilled a spirit of libertinism into me, which without knowing her I should not have had, or thought of surrendering myself to the Marquis after your marriage. But talking is vain. Adieu, worthy Lady Melville; may continual blessings attend you!" So saying, she departed, and has promised to write to me some time after her arrival at the Convent of ———.

Poor unhappy woman! she is worthy of pity; she was born with strong passions, and, at too early a period of life for one of her disposition, left to pursue the bent of her inclination, which was admiration. It was a great mercy she did not immerse herself still deeper in guilt with such a monitor as Violetta. The Marquis only was master of her heart and person, and tho' she
must

must be condemned as guilty, it is not ours to judge too severely. I am by no means an advocate for a monastic life to those of the Romish persuasion, but I think for such as the unhappy Madame St. Clare, it is a comfortable asylum, withdraws them from the seduction of the world, and objects which might otherwise cause a relapse more dreadful than a first error. It is not every one who has resolution alike to make use of reason to prevent their again erring. Madame St. Clare at present has continually in view the late horrible scene, of which she was witness; she saw guilt and atheism its own punishment in the death of her miserable friend; the gloom of a convent will keep it still longer in remembrance, and, I doubt not, create a perfect reformation.----Lord N—— is confined

confined by the gout at Laurel Grove. My Aunt hath written several penitential letters, and intreats me to go there, to seal her pardon, as she calls it, for her cruel treatment. The world smiles on me *now*, Harriot: should not that be my conclusion of her offers.----However, I sincerely forgive her, and intend to wait on her soon.

Lord Duncan continues very unhappy on your account. Neither of us can by any means overcome the woman's integrity with whom I deposit my letters to you, or by any method find out your dwelling-place: he is at times almost frantic; therefore, my dear Harriot need not be under any apprehension that he can indulge one inconstant thought. To confess the truth, I am not sorry it proves so, as a meeting
be-

70 THE MUTABILITY OF

between you might overturn all your resolutions of adhering to your duty. The powerful arguments of a favoured lover, frequently overcomes such resolutions as yours. I hope, my dear friend, you will not think me deficient in friendship for harbouring such sentiments ; but I think perseverance in your duty will, in the end, make Lord and Lady Lorton reconciled to your wishes. I should indeed have been glad to enjoy the happiness of your company, and a few days since waited on Lady Lorton, to beg she would grant that favour, promising her I would retire with you to a distant seat of mine, where I would give her the most solemn assurance she should require, that I would keep you concealed from Lord Duncan, and that you should not even correspond with him. Your Uncle and her
 Lady-

Ladyship unkindly refused me, which I feared indeed would be the case. But let not that discourage you, my dear Harriot; bear yourself up with as much fortitude as you can, and write to me often, to amuse your lonely hours. Your many kind letters and congratulations, during my silence, claim my best thanks, dear Harriot; but you are *sensible* it *must* have afforded me the truest pleasure. If I have given you cruel advice concerning Lord Duncan, consider it is for your welfare, and it arises from my wishes, that you should rise superior to the rest of your sex in conduct as well as in beauty: not that I doubt your propriety; but so amiable a lover as Lord Duncan is almost too alluring to be refused, if reason is not upon guard.

Next

Next week I intend setting out for Laurel Grove. I have promised your lover, that when I return, I will again attempt a reconciliation conformable to his wishes. He will not speak to Lady Emma, and they say she is melancholy on that account; so you alone are not unhappy.

It is reported, that the fictitious Count Lanore, whose real appellation is Signior Florrella, keeps Lady Di under strict confinement. Madame St. Clare informed me, she guessed it must be so, as she had not heard from her. After so tedious a recital you will not be displeased at a respite. Mrs. Gordon, who is now with me, joins in the most affectionate wishes; she likewise incloses a letter in mine. Adieu, my very amiable friend.

A. MELVILLE.

Miss MEYNEL to the Marchioness of
MELVILLE.

SO you imagine, Adelaide, that your uncommon generous offer would be concealed from my knowledge, but you was mistaken, my good friend. Lady Lorton herself wrote me word of the surprise she underwent, when, to insure my happiness with Charles, you offered, as a *small* token of friendship for me, twenty thousand pounds, which were five more than he was to have with Lady Emma. Tho' she acknowledged that they both admired the nobleness of your proffered gift, and extent of affection for me, yet they could not consent that their niece should be under such great obligations to a stranger,—besides, it would prove them mercenary,—fortune

was out of the question, their word had long been engaged to Lord A——for his daughter, and they could not,—would not retract it. She therefore wrote to acquaint me that they were positive in their resolution of marrying Lord Duncan to Lady Emma: he now indeed was become more reconciled to their commands, as he discovered it was for his emolument, both as to fortune and interest. As all hopes therefore of their consent was entirely put a period to, and Lord Duncan become insensible to his own interest, it would be vain for me to entertain any future hope of seducing him, should you, my dear Adelaide, find means to acquaint me of your generous intention, and enable me to purchase a husband. Such was the contents of her very unkind epistle.

Mrs.

Mrs. Gordon spoke of your unbounded friendship for me as it deserved, and informed me your reason for not offering such a present to myself was, you knew a delicacy you acknowledged would be just, would make me refuse it, as it would make me otherwise undergo the censure of the world, who would, with Lady Lorton, say I purchased a husband. In offering it to them it was different, there was more probability of succeeding, as poverty was my crime, and they mercenary; but you find, my generous friend, that even that would not do—pride interposed. Your affection for me, and attention to my character and rectitude of manners, is, my dear Adelaide, adequate to your own conduct in general. I am surprised, though, you retain so firm a regard for a girl so volatile and giddy as Harriot

Meynel : I can only say I am sensible of your kindness, and wish it was in my power to return it.

This Burton is now more attentive than ever to Mrs. Harpur, and, by her extreme diligence and attention to Cantwell's preachment, has been enabled to make a new convert of the Gardener, who is now become regenerate—a new man—and a saint of the household. This has raised her credit with her Mistress, whom she has now almost got the entire sway of. Positively, Adelaide, it is very provoking that I cannot subdue this rebellious spirit of mine, and teach it to dissemble a little ; but when they altogether join in thanks to the Lord for being chosen vessels, I am almost tempted to execrate them for their presumption. Burton is still full of spleen
to

to me, being heartily vexed with herself for acknowledging her sentiments so openly to me, when she was going to quit the old Dame. I must expect no indulgence from her; but she is now pretty well at ease upon that score, as she is so fixed in her Mistress's favour.

Heigh-ho! how ridiculous is it that I cannot obliterate Charles from my memory. He will soon, blessed with Lady Emma, intirely erase me from his——no, he will not; still, if possible, I will flatter myself that he retains the same esteem for me.—I must believe what you say, Adelaide—I will.—But you are not to be informed that I am a very inconsistent creature; you have long known it. Forgive me, receive my grateful thanks, and be as happy as my

78 THE MUTABILITY OF

wishes can make you, and your merit deserves.

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

*The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Miss
MEYNEL.*

Laurel Grove.

IT is now a month, my dear Harriot, since I was received here with the warmest affection, and the most condescending apologies made by Lord and Lady Lorton, respecting their former treatment of me. As I am by no means of an irascible disposition, you may conclude we were soon reconciled. Lady N—— amply repays me now by her extreme kindness. The only subject she displeases me upon, is the severity she treats my poor Melville's memory with. He unfortunately had strong passions,

sions, and gave way to the enjoyment of them too much, by which at length he fell a sacrifice in the early part of life.— He repented, and repaired, in some degree, the injury he had done me, which denoted a generous disposition. Few, guilty of the same error, would so nobly have confessed the folly of their conduct, for fear of bringing a sort of odium on their memory; in private they might have repented, but not so *publicly* have acknowledged it. I cannot, indeed, my dear Harriot, bear to hear him now aspersed: nay, I am in gratitude bound to respect him, for the care he took, though late, to re-establish my character, and at the same time settling so ample a fortune to support the title he bestowed. You are sensible these must be my genuine sentiments, or I should have no occasion to assert them to

so sincere a friend. I do not pretend to say that I am inconsolable for the loss of him ; that would be hypocrisy, he never having been the man of my choice : but I esteemed him while he treated me with affection, and sincerely commiserate his unhappy fate. As his widow, it is really indecent to permit his memory to be reviled in my presence, and it is what I will always make a point to prevent. Lord and Lady N—— insist upon my staying another month ; the former is still confined to the house by the gout, but the neighbouring gentry visit us, and, finding me affluent both in fortune and the favour of my Aunt, treat me with great respect : such are the maxims and policy of the world. Had I appeared among them at the period of my disgrace, what a different treatment

ment should I have received. Oh! world, world, world!

I hope, my dear Harriot, you have overcome all suspicion prejudicial to Lord Duncan, I mean by believing him capable of infidelity. Believe no reports on that point, from Lady Lorton, or those who surround you; for, be assured by me, no man can more firmly esteem any woman, than his Lordship does you. I have had two letters since my arrival here from him, with numerous tender enquiries concerning you, intreating me to forward a letter from him to you. This I dare not undertake till the interdiction is withdrawn.—Persevere, however, and resign to your disagreeable situation, as the means which will convince Lord and Lady Lorton they wrong you, and that the qualities of your mind

are superior to the most splendid fortune. In one respect, they treat you with more tenderness than their darling son, which is, by not endeavouring to unite you to some other man; at least, it is tenderness and pride incorporated. Lady Lorton thinks no one that of late has addressed her niece worthy of her, as they had not a title equal to her ambition. Lord Duncan's perseverance will, I make no doubt, in time overpower their resolutions against his inclination; they will perceive his unhappiness increase, and yield to his wishes.

Yesterday I received a pressing invitation to Elysium Place, from my ever worthy and valuable friend, Mr. Villars, and a few lines from his Lady to the same purport. Though it would afford me very great pleasure to see them, yet there
are

are reasons which render unacceptable their kind request. My dear Mrs. Gordon talks of yielding to an invitation she has received from them, and tries to overcome my resolution; nay, affects not to be convinced of the necessity for my obstinacy on that point; but I am certain her heart acknowledges me in the right.

Mrs. Burton's malignant disposition is so natural to her, that I cannot help (perhaps too harshly) judging it will end but with her life. She must have some object to gratify her spleen, but she varies her object often; therefore, in turn, you may hope to be relieved. Policy and dissimulation, her own weapons, might gain her favour: a constant concurrence with her opinion, and bowing to her imaginary superior wisdom,

84 THE MUTABILITY OF

the only means of gaining the *name* of her friend—She would be favourable to you, because you pleased her vanity—Yet it is a conduct I cannot recommend to you, my dear Harriot; and I am well persuaded you could never put it into practice.

I am hastily summoned to attend company—I am with reluctance obliged to quit you. Adieu!

Yours affectionately,

ADELAIDE MELVILLE.

Miss MEYNEL to the Marchioness of
MELVILLE.

BURTON's passion for detraction overcomes her dissembled spirit of Methodism, and proves her not a faithful
sister

sister of the Elect. Some few days since she entered my apartment with a malevolent smile. Unaccustomed to chearful looks from her lately, I was going to demand the cause, when her eagerness to communicate prevented me.

“ Lord ! Miss, What do you think ? ”
said she—“ What a wicked age we live in !—But you must promise not to mention what I am going to tell you, for it is not proper to be publicly acknowledged, as it would bring a disgrace on the rest of our faithful brethren—But brother Cantwell—that very Cantwell who has been the means of saving so many souls—was last night caught with farmer Brown’s wife, who, it is said, is with child by him. The news was brought to me in the kitchen about an hour since ; upon which that creature

Molly,

Molly (I have no patience with her) fainted. When she recovered, she wept bitterly at his infidelity, and owned she was herself in a thriving way by him—Fie upon her! My mistress called her to account for defaming that holy man, but she swore it was truth—Hush!—Lord! Mrs. Harpur is in the next room,” whispered she.—“Aye, Miss,” said she aloud, winking at me, “did you but know the comfort and consolation of following the fruits of the Spirit—But talking is vain.”——So saying, she left me in the midst of a loud laugh I could not prevent on the occasion. I listened attentively, and found Cantwell himself was in the next room with Dame Harpur. By their conversation I likewise found Molly had agreed to settle another father on her child, and that farmer Brown had consented, for the sake of the
Elect,

Elect, to conceal the injury he had sustained from Cantwell, who defended his guilt to Mrs. Harpur, and convinced her that true faith was sufficient, independent of works—"that it was holy love for his dear sisters made him act as he had done, for to make them the means of bringing more souls to salvation." Positively, Adelaide, I have not patience to dwell longer on this subject. What a set of infamous wretches, to make religion a pretence for the greatest crimes!

My spirits are much exhilarated by the account you give me of Charles's constant affection. Men in general are such a set of fickle wretches, that it is dangerous to put our happiness in their power, which we do when we *esteem* one particularly. I have made use of a pretty delicate word, Adelaide, instead of
that

88 THE MUTABILITY OF

that gross one, *love*—Commend me for it. My vow witholds me from comforting my cousin by any message, but I please myself by thinking he from you is acquainted that I am in health, spite of our separation.

Oh! what pleasure—Oh! what pain—
In thinking of an absent swain!

What a set of ridiculous mortals are lovers! One moment by Doubt almost plunged into Despair, the next elevated by Hope. Different passions alternately succeed each other, and make them appear the children of Folly.

Burton gives me more of her company than usual, because I am the only person here she dares mention the frailty of Cantwell to. She is continually dwelling on that subject, and is happy I agree
with

with her he is culpable. Perhaps it is the first time she has with justice censured. However, she has reported me more favourably to Mrs. Harpur, for I am permitted to walk in the garden and adjoining labyrinth with her. We were walking in the latter place last night, when a very handsome young man, dressed in taste, passed us, with a book in his hand. He bowed respectfully in passing. I asked Burton from whence he came—She smiled—said he was a man of *note*, but would resolve me no further. “Peace go with him,” returned I, and tempted her no more to forego a secret she seemed willing to retain.

I hope, my dear, generous, friendly Adelaide will let me very soon hear from her, which is the only pleasure at present

present can be experienced by her most affectionate

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

The Marchioness of Melville to Miss
MEYNEL.

LORD and Lady N—— are so kind as to insist that my stay here has been but of short duration, though it is three months since my first arrival. I complied with my aunt's request of continuing till his Lordship recovered, to dissipate her anxiety on his account, and if possible render her more chearful. That excuse is over, Lord N—— is perfectly well; and I have an earnest desire to pass some time at * Melville-Park, a place I

* A seat the Marquis had left her, situate in H——shire.

have

have heard much admired. It would give me additional satisfaction if they would accompany me, but all my intreaties are not powerful enough; they will not comply.

Mrs. Gordon, however, laid aside her intention of going to Elysium-Place, and has promised me the happiness of her company to Melville-Park. Ah! my dearest Harriot, could Lady Lorton be persuaded to intrust you to my care, what inexpressible pleasure would it give me—but I must dwell no longer on that subject, as you are convinced of being in possession of the first place in my friendship.

Lord and Lady Walters are gone to France. I have had invitations to the summer residences of the Duke of ———,
 Lord

Lord and Lady Lovemore, &c. &c. and returned as polite refusals as I could frame. I in reality chuse to be more retired during my year of mourning than I possibly could be at their houses. Next week I shall be at London for a few days, while Melville-Park is preparing for the reception of dear Mrs. Gordon and myself. There, undoubtedly, I shall see Lord Duncan, and be able to inform you of his health.

Adieu!

A. MELVILLE.

The Marchioness of MELVILLE *to Miss*
MEYNEL.

Pall-Mall.

THE melancholy scenes which passed here six months since are more powerfully renewed to my remembrance by
being

being on the spot, and determine me to seek out another house for my winter residence. This will occasion my stay in town a little longer than I intended. I am told Lady Myntor is inclined to part with hers in Grosvenor-Square, a situation I much approve, and hope it will be surrendered to my wishes.

I have seen Lord Duncan, my dear Harriot, who asked me more questions about you than I could resolve. He, like all absent lovers, thinks each hour a month, each day a year.

“ Fear, Hope, Despair, and Grief, alternate
reign,

“ Rack his fond heart, and torture ev’ry vein.”

The account you give of yourself in your last epistle, my dear Harriot, avows similar sensations, therefore you may the more readily credit my report.

Though

Though I do not condemn Lord Duncan, I cannot help commiserating poor Lady Emma for being obliged to endure his scorn and inattention—a treatment disagreeable to receive, and caused by the folly of parents, who endeavour to force what will not be commanded. Lady Emma unfortunately had an attachment to your cousin; the command of her father might heighten it; which must render her wretched. She finds herself slighted by the very man she wished most to please, and, if possessed of generosity, must be still more miserable at the idea of causing him so much inquietude on her account, and the reflection that if he is compelled to wed her she must experience the most cruel indifference from him, as another possesses his heart. Make a comparison, my dear Harriot, between her unhappy situation and your own—it balances in your favour—you have

have reason to rejoice in the affection of so constant a lover. My time will be taken up while I remain in town with different affairs I have to transact, but from Melville-Park you shall have a further account of Lord Duncan. Adieu! my dear friend.

A. MELVILLE.

Mrs. GORDON to Miss MEYNEL.

Pall-Mall.

Dear Miss Meynel,

OUR amiable friend the Marchioness, having many little affairs to adjust, as we leave town tomorrow, and finding I was a letter in arrear to you, desired me to settle it at this period, as she had not time herself to inform you she has really taken Lady Myntor's house. I
have

96 THE MUTABILITY OF

have something to impart, likewise, concerning Lord Duncan; but, alas! I fear it will rather distress my dear Miss Meynel.

Lord Villars this morning sent a note to my house in B— Street, purporting a desire of a private audience, to which I returned, I was ready to receive him. He came. The cause of his visit was soon communicated. Lord Duncan had hinted to Lady Melville his design of an altercation with Lord and Lady Lorton, which she had dissuaded him from. Lord Villars, it seems, had done the same to no purpose. He pursued his intention, but could by no means persuade them to consent to his desires. Finding their perseverance, as he imagined, unconquerable, he took a resolution to go abroad, and, under pretence of visiting a friend

a friend in the country, packed up his cloaths, and immediately repaired to Dover, from whence he wrote to Lord Villars an account of his ill success, and resolution of quitting England for ever, unless they would agree to his marriage with his lovely cousin. He likewise intreated his friend, at the same time, to conceal his place of residence from every one but yourself, Lady Melville, and your present correspondent—begged to hear from him soon, and that he would direct his letter by another name, enclosed, to Mons. B——, at Rheims, acquainting him how Lord and Lady Lorton underwent the loss of him, &c.—That he could not avoid reflecting on himself for causing them so much trouble, but that, on so serious a point as that of happiness or misery for life, he could not comply with their wishes.—

He concluded his letter to Lord Villars with informing him he was just embarking for Calais, his heart occupied with the idea of his dear Harriot, whom he hoped Lady Melville would assure of his constancy and affection. She is just entered, and says she will write on a few lines. I resign my pen.—

Lady MELVILLE to Miss MEYNEL.

I FLATTER myself that my dear friend will not afflict herself for the departure of her worthy lover, because it proves the extent of his affection for my amiable Harriot; and though I said every thing I could to make him desist from proceeding to an open rupture with Lord and Lady Lorton, yet I cannot now be sorry for it, as I retain some hopes that

the loss of his company will affect their tenderness for him, and in the end make them consent to your mutual happiness. At any rate you should not make yourself unhappy, my dear friend, as it frees him from a wearisome persecution. Let me hear soon that you are reconciled to his departure. Time will not permit me to say more.

A. MELVILLE.

Mrs. GORDON, *in Continuation.*

YOU desire to be informed, dear Miss Meynel, concerning Lord Villars' conduct in regard to Lady Melville, and if she has had an interview with him since the Marquis's death. You guessed right indeed, when you imagined she would be displeased with you if you wrote to

her on that subject, for she will not suffer me to make use of his name but as an indifferent person. His Lordship, since his first knowledge of her, has behaved with such respect and propriety, notwithstanding his violent passion, that it has exceedingly surprized me, and I believe has heightened Lady Melville's esteem for him. After the Marquis's death, he sent compliments of condolence, and enquiry after her health, as a distant friend would. She changed colour, and returned the common answer. There it dropped; for he never attempted to visit her before she went to Laurel-Grove, or since her return: but Lord Duncan informed me he was in continual doubts and fears, lest she should reject him when the period arrived that he might address her. He talked of her to me this morning in rapture, and
intreated

intreated me, for compassion's sake, to inform him whether I thought he was disagreeable to her? or whether, when her year of mourning was expired, she would reject his addresses? It was necessary to conceal what little knowledge I had of her sentiments of him; therefore answered, it was out of my power to oblige him.

“Alas! your friend despises me, then,” said he. “How wretched must I be!”

I intreated him not to cherish so unfavourable an opinion of himself, since I did not doubt but on his uncle's account he was possessed of her good wishes and friendship.

“She flattered me so once, Mrs. Gordon,” returned he, with a sigh; “but friendship alone——Oh!”——

“Don’t indulge Despair,” returned I, with a smile; “time will unravel Lady Melville’s sentiments. Take my advice, my Lord; cherish Hope till you have reason for the contrary passion.”

He bowed, thanked me for my kindness, and soon after retired.

I ventured to tell Lady Melville that his Lordship had made numerous enquiries after her—sighed much—and wished to see her, &c.—

“Stop, my dear Mrs. Gordon,” said she, interrupting me; “I am obliged to Lord Villars for his friendship, but must intreat you will speak of him to me only as of a common acquaintance. I have been under great obligations to his worthy uncle; therefore, if at the expiration of my mourning he chuses to visit

fit

fit me on the footing of an acquaintance only, he is welcome; the world cannot then censure me.—I see you smile, my dear friend," added she; "but you are mistaken in my sentiments. At present I will say no more."

Thus our conversation ended.

It gives me great pleasure to reflect that two such amiable people will in time be united, as their valuable qualifications will make themselves happy and all around them. Lady Melville has amply rewarded all those who treated her with humanity during her misfortunes, and says she has nothing now to wish for but the enjoyment of your company, which she has been so long deprived of. You may be certain, dear Miss Meynel, that my wishes to see you are the same, and that you are constantly

in our thoughts and conversation. None can have a sincerer friendship for you than

SARAH GORDON.

Miss MEYNEL to the Marchioness of
MELVILLE.

SO poor Charles is gone to seek adventures for the sake of his Dulcinea. He is undoubtedly a constant swain; but I have still some fears, Adelaide, lest some of the ladies at Rheims should entrap him with their wit and vivacity—Then adieu fidelity and Harriot. Lady Emma was *still life*—contrary to his taste—But, what signifies? If he gains a new love, I shall regain my liberty.—Then again something whispers, What signifies liberty, when the heart is tortured and enslaved?—Very true, good Mr. Monitor.—

tor.—Alas! Adelaide, it is very provoking for such a lively spirit as mine to be reduced to this—heigho!—sighing state. However, according to your commands, I conclude by hoping the best.

I am continually wishing to see you: but had I an opportunity to elope from hence and pay you a visit, it would be intirely withdrawing myself from Lady Lorton's protection—She would never forgive me—She would abandon me for ever, and——No, Adelaide, she shall not have reason to blame my conduct, however unkind she treats me.

Heavens bless my dear Charles! May pleasing reflections attend his solitary hours, if he has any, and yours likewise. Adieu!

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

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HARRIOT MEYNEL.

Ld. VILLARS to Ld. DUNCAN at Rheims.

FORTUNE begins to favour thee, Charles. Lord A——'s eyes are at last enlightened, and by your flight he is sufficiently convinced that you mean not to marry his daughter. This has roused his sensibility: he is enraged with Lord Lorton, as well as yourself, for the slight Lady Emma's charms undergo. The old Marquis of —, at a convenient period, proposes for her Ladyship: Lord A—— seems inclined to favour him; but I am told the poor Lady is not willing to become such a sacrifice. As I visit his Lordship, though so particular a friend of yours, I ventured to his house: he exclaimed much against you, and questioned me whether I thought his daughter so very undeserving a young man's regard.

regard. I, in my answer, did Lady Emma's charms due justice, and alleged, in your defence, a prior engagement. I believe, Duncan, I may tell thee, without being guilty of vanity, that, had I offered myself for a son-in-law at that period, his Lordship would have favoured me as much as the Marquis of ——. I was invited that evening to a rout at his house; which invitation I accepted, on purpose to see how Lady Emma looked after your provoking insult to her beauty.

She coloured much at my first addressing her; but, recovering herself, "You see, my Lord," said she, with a faint smile, "I still exist, though Lord Duncan has insulted and deserted me."

I vindicated your conduct, and set it in its proper light."

“Lord Villars’ eloquence always deserves attention,” returned she, with an affected curtesy and manner I never before observed her to make use of. “Lord Duncan’s rudeness, or inattention, as you please to term it, was indeed very visible from our first acquaintance—he certainly was not guilty of *much* dissimulation, my Lord; but it was very happy for me that *my* heart was likewise engaged to an object more worthy my regard,” said she, (blushing, with vexation, I suppose, Charles)—“though, perhaps, there are insurmountable difficulties between us, which can never be got the better of.” So saying, she hurried from me to another part of the room. From her manner it’s visible her heart is wounded; but I imagine she was desirous, through my means, you might have reason to think your conduct gave her no pain. Poor girl! she is sincerely to be pitied:
but

but I should have admired her more, if she had not endeavoured to be guilty of dissimulation.

Lord and Lady Lorton are much affected ~~by~~ your departure, Duncan. They sent for me, and made efforts to learn where you are gone; but, according to your desire, (tho' I pitied their anxiety,) I concealed my knowledge of it. We had a long conversation, in which I took the liberty to recommend your interest and Miss Meynel's. To rouse their fears, too, Charles, I pointed out what ill consequences might ensue from their obstinacy; brought proofs of several young fellows in similar cases, who, from disappointments, gave themselves up to despair from not being permitted to enter into a virtuous connection with the women of their choice—afterwards re-
lapsed

lapsed into the most abandoned morals, and led the most profligate and disgraceful lives. I dwelt on the subject, in hopes of favouring your wishes, by awakening their fears. They did me the honour to listen to my harangue, and when I took my leave pressed me to visit them often, as usual. Lord A——'s warmth has rather incensed your father, therefore I have hopes you will arrive at the completion of your wishes.

The lovely Marchioness is gone to Melville-Park, accompanied by that friendly, worthy woman, Mrs. Gordon, who hath promised, at a proper period, to plead in my favour with the most amiable of women. Three months still have I to wait, Duncan: how has my patience been put to the trial!—But could she then be persuaded to listen to me,

me, it would amply recompence for what I have endured. Should she reject me—I must not harbour the idea; it would overpower my reason. At Elysium-Place she favoured me with her esteem and friendship; her eyes said *more*. But then that cruel conversation she had with Lady Di Horton concerning divorces occurs to my memory. Should those be her real sentiments, I must still be miserable—But, no, I will not think of it—it was only a transitory dispute to oppose Lady Di. Lovers reason like madmen, Charles. I will relieve thee.

Adieu!

VILLARS.

The

The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Miss

MEYNEL.

Melville-Park.

YOU guess the situation of this place from the date of my letter: it stands in a small park; the gardens are extensive, and well laid out, my dear Harriot; but, as I flatter myself you will soon be permitted to take a view of them, I shall desist from a further description.

Lord A—— and your uncle are at variance, which gives your friends hope that your return home will be the consequence. Ah! my dearest Harriot, how happy will be our meeting after so tedious an absence! I can never sufficiently adore the ways of Providence, for having restored me to affluence and ease.

ease. Your dear company will compleat my felicity.

There are several agreeable families surround me, who have honoured me with their company. Mrs. Gordon and your Adelaide frequently amuse themselves by visiting the little cottages around. How pleasing is it, my dear friend, to encourage industry! and how charming to relieve the distresses of those whom illness or misfortune has brought to inevitable want! What a solid satisfaction is vibrated on the heart that is thus employed! How much better money and time so expended than sums lavished on what are generally called the pleasures, but are in reality the vanities and fripperies of life!

The Hon. Mr. and Mrs. C—— have
favoured

114 THE MUTABILITY OF

favoured me with their company: their stay is never long in this neighbourhood, I am told, as they are a very polite couple, and detest solitude. They despise my want of taste, are amazed at my mean condescension in conversing with a parcel of Hottentots, as they term the cottagers, and divert themselves exceedingly at my vulgar amusement. Adieu! my dearest friend.

A. MELVILLE.

Miss MEYNEL to the Marchioness of
MELVILLE.

I CAN scarce hold my pen for joy! That dear, benevolent, friendly Adonis, Lord Villars, has, by his uncommon eloquence, overcome Lord and Lady Lorton's objection against my union with Charles.

Charles. My aunt owns, in her letter, it was his just reasoning made them consent. I am every moment expecting Thomas, who is to attend me to London. Lord Duncan has been written for to return home, but you undoubtedly have been informed of it by the man who is most worthy your esteem. Forgive me, Adelaide; your year of mourning is just at its expiration, and I have long forbore mentioning his name. Surely, when decency permits, you will give him leave to plead his cause; his merit deserves to be rewarded by the only woman who is capable of doing it. Has he not, notwithstanding the predominance of his unbounded passion for you, while your situation made it criminal for him to acknowledge it, strove to conceal it, and made it apparent only by the height of friendship and esteem? What man,

so

116 THE MUTABILITY OF

so situated, could behave with such propriety, except himself? Indeed, Adelaide, if by an ill-timed prudery you forego happiness by joining with such a mate, I must say you deserve misery. Mrs. Gordon tells me you will not suffer her to mention his name. What can you mean by meditating cruelty? I shall insist upon a confession when we meet, which I hope will be soon. Conveniently I shall arrive, as your friend is obliged to leave you.

The young man I mentioned to you, that I met some time since, was the husband of Lady Di Horton, who came to this neighbourhood for a few days. She is in safe confinement in Cornwall, where she is likely to terminate her days.

Thomas is arrived; and, thanks to
Heaven,

Heaven, tomorrow I leave this dreary, solitary place, and the society of Croakers. Burton is wonderful civil, and Dame Harpur not sorry to part with her refractory charge. Adieu! my dear girl.

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

From the Same to the Same.

London.

MY Amyntor is returned, full of joy at his parents goodness, and extacy at his foreseen happiness—I mean what he in hope foresees. Lord and Lady Lorton, since they have consented to our union, are willing it should be soon, and all things are preparing. I intend, therefore, with my future guide, to pass a few days at Melville-Park, by which time your mourning will be laid aside,
and

and I shall insist upon your returning hither with us. Positively, Adelaide, you ought to countenance me by appearing at the altar, and fixing Lord Villars' happiness. You are under many obligations to that worthy friend of ours—you esteem, nay, you love him—How ridiculous, then, is it to render him unhappy by a peculiar fancy of your own, formed only to embitter both your lives. You have paid sufficient respect to the Marquis's memory; and positively, Adelaide, if you continue obstinate in your strange whim, I shall be almost ready to forswear your friendship, though I have been so much obliged to you.

Lord Villars has seen Clairville, who is exceedingly dejected at your refusing him again, and is determined to make a trial whether salt water will extinguish his flame.

Fye, fye, Adelaide, you make strange work among the men. Here is Lord M—— often in the dumps, sighing after “the adorable, insensible Marchioness,” as he terms you. I am sometimes almost tempted to bring them with me to Melville-Park, where, if you continue obdurate, they may put a period to their misery in your willow grove. If it should so happen, a monument shall be raised to their memory, recording their misfortunes, with the following epitaph :

Fair Adelaide was the cruel cause
 We thus subverted Nature's laws ;
 Weary of the afflicting pain
 Occasion'd by her sad disdain,
 We wander'd here—and here, you see,
 We found the means ourselves to free.
 Take warning, reader ; guard your heart
 From hopeless love, and Cupid's dart.

Notwithstanding my raillery, I shall become serious concerning Villars, as he is
 not

not an object to be trifled with ; so prepare yourself for an altercation, if you don't coincide with my opinion. Blessings attend you, my dear friend ; forgive my freedom, and believe me always

Your affectionate

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

The Countess of WALTERS to the Marchioness of MELVILLE.

Paris.

Ma chere niece,

AS I knew you were bigotted to the folly of decorum, notwithstanding all Count St. Lou's intreaties, I forebore writing to you in his favour sooner, flattering myself that at what you term a proper period my recommendation would be more regarded. *Vous savez, ma chere*

Lady

Lady Melville, *que*—but I forget English is most pleasing to you.—You know then, my dear niece, that the Count has a fine fortune, and long has doated on you to distraction; he bids me say it was the force of that passion made him culpable.—But he has often told you so, Lady Melville; I need not repeat it.—You must be long since convinced of your power over him, and, I think, if you are mistress of your senses, will not refuse so polished a young nobleman; one whose life will be spent in endeavouring to form the happiness of yours. Lord Walters joins with me in earnest wishes for the accomplishment of this union.—The count is flying on the wings of love to England, and I have desired him to deliver this himself to you. Adieu, *ma chere fille*. Adieu.

J. WALTERS.

The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Mrs. GORDON, with the foregoing enclosed.

YOU will find by the inclosed, my dear Mrs. Gordon, poor Lady Walters continues as volatile as ever. What a misfortune is it, that at her time of life she will not afford some moments to reflection. The least attention at the time she wrote, must have pointed out to her the impropriety of her recommendation. No one, I think, but herself, could have desired such a union.

Count St. Lou had really the audacity to bring the letter to Melville-Park. My servants conducted him into a parlour, and informed me a gentleman from France desired to see me,—he came from Lady Walters, and had a letter.

Luckily

Luckily Annette recollected there was a piece of muslin and other things left littering in the room the stranger was in, and asked if she had not better remove them. I answered in the affirmative, and bid her remark whether she had ever seen the gentleman before, when in Paris with me. She hastened to execute my commission, and returned in the utmost consternation, exclaiming, "Count St. Lou, my Lady!" I must own, his name affected me for a few minutes, as it recalled some disagreeable circumstances; but recovering myself, I sent Annette to him with my compliments, and that if he had a letter from Lady Walters, he must deliver it to her, for I never would speak to him more, and intreated he would leave the house. Several messages past before he would take his departure, but at last

finding me resolute, he was obliged to go. He has wrote to me since, which letter I would not have received had I known its author: but I have dwelled too long on so disagreeable a subject.

My dear Harriot is here, all health and spirits. Lord Duncan likewise. In a few days I shall attend them to town, to see them united beyond the power of a separation but by death. May they long enjoy the felicity they deserve ! As soon as they are married, Lord and Lady Lorton will set off with them to Myrtle Hall. By that time I hope you will be able to come to London. Adieu, my amiable friend.

Yours, &c.

A. MELVILLE.

Mar-

Marchioness of MELVILLE to Mrs.

GORDON.

Grosvenor-Square.

MY dearest Harriot yesterday became a wife: her friend, Miss Archer, attended as bride-maid, and Lord Villars as groomsmen; Lord Lorton, his Lady, and myself, completed the company. She gave her hand with pleasure and chearfulness, and Lord Duncan received it with inexpressible joy. The carriages were ready at the door to convey all the company but me to Myrtle Hall. I endured many reproaches for my obstinacy, but alas! my dear friend, you know it is necessary for my repose. Since my arrival in town, Lord Villars, in a manner but too well calculated to affect any woman's heart, addressed me;

his respectful pleasing manner encreased that esteem and regard for him which I have long involuntarily entertained. I candidly recited my reasons for refusing him, acknowledging at the same time my friendship; and that, was he, according to my idea, at liberty to marry, he should have the preference. You may be assured, my dearest friend, he made use of the most powerful arguments to confute my opinion, but in vain; it is a point of conscience which the most learned in disputation can never eradicate from my breast. It causes me great affliction to think I am the means of making so worthy an object unhappy; and to redress if possible his unhappiness and my own, by avoiding his presence, I am determined immediately to set out to Laurel Grove, from whence I have received so many kind
invi-

invitations—there I will continue for some time. Alas!—I cannot express my misery, dear Mrs. Gordon,—but I must not marry Lord Villars, whatever may be my partiality for him,—my God forbids it,—I dare not disobey. People frequently justify their own misconduct by the practice of others. The friends they were connected with perhaps erred: but is that any good reason for following a vicious example? But, my dear friend, we should never pursue a multitude to do evil. Because divorces by legislative power are allowed lawful, I am not to accept the opinion of those who vindicate that law, and think so too. It is the fashion to keep mistresses,—men appear in public with them, tho' they have amiable deserving wives; but its being a common practice and vice of the age, does not exculpate, but rather

aggravate the guilt. Licentiousness is still a crime, tho' the virtuous part of mankind do not treat the perpetrators of it in the manner they deserve. If vices were more discountenanced, they would not be quite so common; at least they would be more concealed, which would be advantageous, as ill example is frequently too prevalent.

As a small token of my friendship for dear Harriot, I have presented her a set of jewels, not of a value equal to my wishes, because I knew she would not accept of what she would term too costly a present. May she live long to enjoy them! As for me, Heaven only knows my fate.

Adieu,

A. MELVILLE.

Lord VILLARS to the Marchionefs of
MELVILLE.

IT was a fufficient punishment, moft amiable Lady Melville, to be excluded from addreffing you, without being deprived of your prefence and friendship; but every action of yours caufes admiration, becaufe it proceeds from generofity and benevolence—you fled thinking it neceffary for my repofe. Alas! Madam, tranquility has long taken flight from my bofom, but your prefence as a friend, and engaging converfation, would preferve me from immerging into deffpair. Why! O why! lovely Lady Melville, will you perfevere in fo cruel a refolution? You infift that Scripture difallows a divorced perfon to marry, and that you muft be guided by that. Forgive

me, Madam, if I again allege to the contrary; from Scripture I can prove it: but you will not be convinced, and I dare not offend you further, by dwelling upon a subject you so often have commanded me to be silent on.—I will cease complaining to my friends—I will repair to some dreary solitude, and pass my days and nights in misery.—Yet why do I, by reciting my unhappy state, affect so humane a heart, which from the most refined motives rejects me?—I am torn by contending passions, my amiable friend.——I admire, I adore you more than ever,—I renounce my own judgment, and adopt yours,—the next moment I disavow it:—in short, that I am in a state of distraction, is almost certain. An obdurate father compelled me to wed Lady Mary, whose conduct I disapproved before she became

came my wife.—Afterwards she became publicly criminal:---my idea of happiness was fixed in a family way, and there all hopes were put a period to---we were separated by the laws of God and man——But I again relapse.---Oh! Lady Melville, you almost deprive me of my reason. If you have any compassion for the wretch who writes to you, afford him one line of comfort to cheer his heart in the desponding state it at present experiences. Believe, worthy Lady Melville, that my continual wishes are for your happiness, and that while I exist, I shall be

Your most respectful,

Affectionate humble Servant,

VILLARS.

The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Lord

VILLARS.

Laurel-Grove.

My LORD,

BEING of a disposition that disdains to conceal its sentiments, you will not be surpris'd if I am guilty of impropriety, in acknowledging that your letter occasioned great anxiety of mind, as I sincerely commiserate your misfortunes. It was my esteem and friendship that prompted me to avoid you. I most sincerely wish your Lordship repose and happiness: time, and the absence of her who now causes your affliction, may effect it; it is the only means left in my power to re-establish your peace of mind.

My conscience dictates these sentiments, from which I dare not deviate.

As

As this is the last letter I shall ever write upon the subject, I will take the liberty to quote from Holy Writ the portions which have fixed an opinion I shall never alter. In the tenth chapter of St. Mark, we read as follows:

“ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh:

so

so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter : and he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her ; and if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Again, in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke : " Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery ; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery."

These, my Lord, conjoined, are our Redeemer's words, and are to me convincing. Such a command, I repeat, I dare not deviate from.

His

His Apostles preached his blessed doctrine. St. Paul says, in the 7th Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, "The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband: so then, if while her husband liveth she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

This proves plainly, my Lord, we should be dead to the old law, that is, the law of Moses, concerning divorces, and, alive otherwise, be guided by the new law, viz. that of the Saviour of the world, who came to give a law unto us, and redeem us.

St.

St. Paul likewise, in his Epistles to the Corinthians, says, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married."

These, my Lord, are the weighty proofs which overthrow all your Lordship's arguments, consequently those of all the rest of my friends, on this subject. I must therefore intreat to hear no more on a point wherein I am determined to remain inflexible. If it will afford you any relief, or satisfaction, to think I will never marry another, be assured of it, as none but Lord Villars can ever be firmly possessed of my utmost esteem and friendship.

When I return to Grosvenor-Square, I shall be proud to receive your Lordship, on public days, with the rest of my friends;

friends; but, after what has passed, must be excused from admitting you, my Lord, when alone.

I am, with true esteem,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

A. MELVILLE.

Lady DUNCAN to the Marchioness of

MELVILLE.

TO confess the truth, Adelaide, it is with reluctance I of late sit down to write to you. The cause is evident—My pen will always mark down the sentiments of my heart—My heart condemns your conduct to Lord Villars, and I cannot forbear continually chiding you—It at the same time reminds me that I am under the greatest obligations to you on many accounts,

accounts, therefore it is the height of impertinence for me to be continually tormenting and reproving you—But my gratitude and friendship, it again answers, require my interfering on a point which your happiness is so much concerned in. You are not to be informed I always was a pert chit, therefore I cannot change Nature; besides, my deeree here is rather wroth about your cruelty to his inestimable friend, who is continually writing most lamentable epistles concerning his truly tragic state.—Indeed, he is in a piteous plight. Positively your opinion on divorces is very unjust, Adelaide; for instance, this poor man in question—His wife grew frisky, and dishonoured him—Well, you grant it proper he should gain a divorce from her—But then he must lead a solitary life, without a helpmate or companion, because she has gone astray;

stray ; so that he is to suffer all his life for her crimes. Pray what justice can you allege in that, my obstinate friend ? Lady Mary may live years, in which time Lord Villars and yourself may become victims to your absurd whim. Oh ! fie, Adelaide ; for the love of us all, be more complying, for when we reflect on the consequence that may ensue from your adherence to a false principle, we tremble for your destiny. Villars adores you so, that he is now, I believe, almost persuaded you are right—But you have long since deprived him of reason. What a fyren you are !

You take Scripture for your guide, Adelaide ; the 5th of St. Matthew says divorces were not lawful except in cases of fornication : that is a strong proof against you, my dear perverse one—Re-
flect

fect on it, and take compassion on poor Villars.

Archer has had a letter from her sister, who, it seems, is in Lady Emma's confidence. Poor Lady Emma has been dangerously ill with a fever, in which she was delirious, and raved incessantly on Lord Villars. Lord A——, who doats on his daughter, desired Miss Flora Archer to question her concerning his Lordship, when she had intervals of sense. He always imagined she liked my Duncan, till then. She confessed to Miss Flora, that she had long loved Lord Villars, and had of late entertained hopes that she was not disagreeable to him, but that the news of his being on the point of marriage with Lady Melville quite overpowered and reduced her to her present languid state. Miss

Flora

Flora informed Lord A——, unknown to Lady Emma, who, having heard of your refusal to Villars, has resolved to propose his daughter for him. The Marquis of —— has been some time discarded.

My friend Archer's lover, I find, is eldest brother to the identical Capt. F— whom Lady Villars was guilty of *crim. con.* with. The Captain, it seems, is coming to England, but informs his brother he shall leave her Ladyship behind in Holland.

Lord Duncan desires his best respects to you, and bids me add, from him, that you are a very unreasonable, cruel female. Forgive us, Adelaide, for the liberty we take in censuring your conduct; but positively we cannot avoid it,
when

when we reflect what an enemy you are to your own peace of mind and happiness.

Before I conclude I must recite an anecdote concerning Lord Villars, which will increase your regard of him as well as mine. My better half here recited it to me. When Lord Villars was at college, he was intimate with Mr. Wilde, and at a vacation complied with his intreaty of spending some time with his friend. That young gentleman had only a mother living, with whom he resided. Mrs. Wilde lived always in the country, and used frequently to invite a Miss Hall to pass some months with her, she being a lively girl, and entertaining company. Miss Hall was the daughter of a neighbouring parson, who had several other children, and, what is commonly the case,

case, you know, Adelaide, had nothing to leave them at his decease. She was four or five years older than Mr. Wilde. A few days after Lord Villars arrived at his friend's, he perceived the young people were lovers, and rallied Wilde on the occasion, saying, at the same time, he feared Mrs. Wilde would not approve of Miss Hall on account of her want of fortune.—“Pshaw!—d-mn'd stuff!” replied Wilde; “Why, you don't think I would be so mean-spirited as to marry such a girl?—No, no, I intend having her at a cheaper rate than that, Villars. She will soon, I hope, gratify my wishes, for she begins to be complying; and, if you like her, will then turn her over to you.”

Villars, in return, made a speech of an hour long on the villainy of such a conduct,

conduct, and the crime of seducing innocence : but his harangue was to no purpose ; Wilde said he was determined to proceed as he had intended, and with an oath told his Lordship not to spoil sport. It was night when this conversation happened. The chaste Lord Villars could not sleep ; he was all night considering how he should preserve the poor girl from ruin. He rose very early, and went to the most retired walks in the garden. His reverie was of short duration, as he heard voices which he soon found were Wilde's and Miss Hall's. Mr. Wilde convinced the poor girl, by the most artful manner, that at that period he could not marry her ; but if she would comply with his wishes, the next term he would contrive means of conveying her to London, and there marry her. She answered, in return, " that she could not indeed

indeed yield her honour to him, because probably afterwards he would be loth to marry her." A long discourse ensued, which ended in his victory—She promised to admit him to her chamber that very night, and they parted.

Lord Villars was still more shocked at this scene: he revolved many schemes to withdraw her immediately from Wilde's power; at last he fixed on one, which was to inform Mr. Wilde's aunt of it, who was a good religious woman, and lived about eight miles off. He immediately repaired there, and informed Mrs. Gill of it. The good lady was much affected at the news, and told Lord Villars she would go there to dinner, and bring Miss Hall home with her that night, where she should remain till a plan could be settled to withdraw her

intirely from her nephew. As her reason to her sister Wilde, she would allege fear that her nephew would marry Miss Hall. Things being thus settled, Lord Villars called on a gentleman, and brought him to Wilde's to dinner; at which time Mrs. Gill arrived, as if by accident, and took Miss Hall with her, as concerted. The young lady was very loth to go, and Mr. Wilde quite in a passion at her departure. When alone with Lord Villars, he attacked him with being the contriver of Miss Hall's being taken away. His Lordship did not totally deny it. Several words ensued: and Villars quitted the house with a tranquil conscience for having done his duty in saving a young creature from infamy and ruin. He did not stop there; he wrote to Miss Hall, advising her, as a friend, to beware of the future seduction of
Mr.

Mr. Wilde, who was bent on her ruin. He displayed to her the misery that must ensue after her deviation from virtue, for that her seducer would never marry her; therefore affliction and misery must be the portion of her family as well as self. It was Mrs. Gill that informed Duncan of this affair. She said the girl was exceedingly affected at Lord Villars' uncommon humanity and compassion for a stranger, and with tears of contrition shewed his letter to her, intreating her aid to protect her from a man she owned she loved too well, notwithstanding his cruelty to her. Mrs. Gill pitied her much, and contrived to send her to a worthy friend of hers, where she might remain some months in safety from the allurements of Mr. Wilde. There a gentleman of small fortune saw her—admired her—and some time after they

were united ; the consequence of which was, she soon despised her libertine lover as much as she once loved him. Thus ends my story, Adelaide ; and high time it is to lay aside my pen, when I have said that I am

Yours most affectionately,

HARRIOT DUNCAN.

The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Lady
DUNCAN.

Laurel-Grove.

CRUEL Harriot ! Surely your affection for me is lessened since your marriage, or you could never so strenuously endeavour by various arguments to aggravate my affliction. You well know my esteem for Lord Villars, and you know that I am but too well convinced of his merit ; why, then, should you

-ive

strive to heighten that unfortunate affection by reciting anecdotes which must, if possible, add to my grief, by reflecting that I can never be the wife of a man who hath so exalted a character.

My ideas on divorces, I still maintain, are not unjust. I grant, that, when a woman is criminal, a divorce is necessary, but then neither of the parties ought to marry again; it should only be a divorce from bed and board. You allege it is very hard a man should suffer for his wife's guilt, and be prevented from taking a second companion. I grant, my Harriot, that such an unfortunate husband is worthy of pity, but I would not have him perjure himself by a second marriage, because his real wife injured him. He must bear this misfortune with resignation, as well as

others that are met with in life; it is not, thank God, a common situation. You have so lately passed through the marriage ceremony, my dear friend, that you cannot possibly forget the solemn reciprocal vow you both took at the altar; it expressly says, "till death do you part." The invisible Creator of the world is, we doubt not, always present, but more particularly in places dedicated to his worship. The priest, in his awful presence, joins your hands, and says, "Those whom God hath joined together, let *no* man put asunder."

He afterwards, in the name of the Holy Trinity, pronounces you man and wife. No clause is inserted in the ceremony that you ever can be disunited during your lives. It is, therefore, my fixed opinion, that no human law should overthrow

overthrow the marriage-vow taken in the more immediate presence of invisible Omnipotence. Indeed, my dear Harriot, they must give a pretty extensive latitude to their conscience who admit the propriety of a second marriage in such a case.

The verse you have fixed on is no point against me, my dear Harriot. The Jews commonly divorced their wives for the most trivial things; that charm variety was frequently the cause. Our Saviour knew the hardness of their hearts: he came to establish new and purer laws among them. By degrees he spread his doctrine, that it might be the more effectually received. In the 19th Chapter of St. Matthew he informs his hearers, that God's intention was to pair a male and female for life, and afterwards pro-

ceeds to the verse you quote. His disciples then argue, that, if the case of a man were so with his wife, it was not good to marry: in answer to which, our Saviour recommends chastity, but alleges, that, as every one cannot persevere in it, marriage was therefore instituted, to preserve men from sin, (at least it is the sense I receive those words in,) therefore they ought to remain chaste, and not marry, notwithstanding their wives being guilty of a crime which might separate them from dwelling together. In the most important articles of life, I think it necessary to salvation to strictly adhere to Scripture. We should endeavour to fulfil our duty to God preferable to that of his creatures. If from unavoidable uneasiness of mind I should devolve into an ill state of health, which may put a period to my days, I should

die

die satisfied with having done my duty in combating against an action which would displease my Maker—rely on his mercy—and hope for never-ending happiness in a world free from mutability. I must therefore, my beloved friend, intreat, that, for the future, you will desist from defending an action I shall ever esteem criminal. I never will marry Lord Villars while Lady Mary exists.

Lord and Lady N—— were great advocates for his Lordship, but finding me inflexible have dropped the subject. Count St. Lou has had the rudeness to write to me here. I am duly attended by Lord C——: he is an amiable young man; but, oh! how unlike the truly admirable Lord Villars! Adieu! my ever-dear Harriot: remember me to your Lord, and tell him his regard for his

friend makes him condemn me without reason, or reflecting.

Yours,

A. MELVILLE.

Lord VILLARS to Lord DUNCAN.

London.

FAME sounded the trumpet of Truth, Charles, when it informed thee of the proposal Lord A—— made me. The reason I mentioned it not in my last letter was because I feared you might imagine I recited it for the gratification of my vanity, though Heaven knows I am not much governed by the dictates of that goddess of folly. My gloomy disposition at present rather relapses me into a contempt of myself by the disappointment of my wishes. The cruel, though lovely

lovely Lady Melville perseveres in making me wretched; but the more I reflect on her virtue and goodness, the more I adore her: nay, there are moments that I acknowledge the justice of her sentiments in refusing me. In short, Duncan, I am more contented with only her esteem and friendship, and enjoying the melancholy idea of being beloved by her, at a distance, than I should be with the possession of the most beautiful woman in the creation. She has beauty to excess, all beholders must acknowledge; but I adore her mind more than her person—that beams celestial virtue. Oh! Charles, hard, very hard, is my fate, to be approved, yet be thus wretched.

I waited on Lord A—— by his own appointment, when he took an opportunity to tender me his daughter. My

answer was soon given: I informed him of the situation of my heart, which could never be withdrawn from the object which at present possessed it. He intreated me to visit her, at least till she recovered; but, as that would be deceiving her, I begged to be excused. A few days after, she was able to sit in her dressing-room; he intreated me to go only as a common acquaintance, to inquire after her health. With much persuasion I complied. Being the victim of what I may term a hopeless passion myself, she demanded my pity. We were soon left alone.

“ My friend Flora Archer was overcome by my father’s intreaties, my Lord,” said she, “ to recite to him the imaginary cause of my illness, and because I avowed a particular esteem and friendship for your Lordship, imagined from thence
my

my complaint proceeded; the consequence of which was, my father's tenderness for me obscuring my demerits, he offered you his daughter; a circumstance, my Lord, that has much wounded my pride. Lord Duncan was never possessed of my affection—Your Lordship, before his arrival, had gained my friendship—But Lord Duncan was a man of merit, and the slight he put on me gave me pain, as it depreciated me in the eyes of the world. Your Lordship was, nay, still is, possessed of my friendship, the consequence of knowing your merit: but, my Lord," said she, with a disdainful look, "I would not have you imagine that you have the power of life and death over me because my father and Miss Flora have imbibed a mistaken notion"—

"When

“When I behave with insolence, Lady Emma,” said I, interrupting her, “condemn me:—vanity I was never accused of:—your friendship was more than I believed myself possessed of till now, when yourself informs me of it. I imagined your heart Lord Duncan’s at the time you disavowed it to me, and most sincerely pitied you; for, alas! I myself know too well the tortures of a hopeless passion. You acknowledge I was once possessed of your friendship, but your present manner proves it fled; therefore, my Lady, I will no longer weary you with my presence.” So saying, I arose to quit the room.

“You answer me as I deserve, my Lord,” said she, weeping.—“Alas! I can no longer disguise my sentiments: illness has rendered me weak both in
body

body and mind——But tell me candidly, my Lord, Do you hate me? Was Lady Melville out of the question, should I be a disgusting object?—Alas! I blush at my folly—I retract my words—but I still esteem you——Oh! my Lord, I am an object truly worthy of your pity—I condemn myself for want of modesty, but indeed my situation is truly pitiable.—Cruel father! Why did you give your Emma an opportunity of exposing herself,” said she, still weeping.

If I must confess the truth, Charles, it is, that I could scarce forbear shedding tears with her. I endeavoured to console her—gratified the vanity she might have, by granting her possessed of every amiable quality—(I think, indeed, she has many)—and that nothing but a prior engagement could have made me behold
her

her with indifference. She seemed pleased, though not satisfied—thus we parted. I called on her once since, and we treated each other as acknowledged friends. She certainly is an amiable woman, when an Adelaide or Harriot is not in question. But I will bid thee adieu now, Charles, as in two days I shall see thee at Myrtle Hall. My best wishes attend Lady Duncan.

Yours,

VILLARS..

Mademoiselle BARFLEUR to the Marchioness of MELVILLE.

From the Convent of ———

MADAM,

A Stranger addresses you, who has often lamented the impossibility of ever
being

being personally acquainted with a Lady, whose compassionate and truly Christian disposition is evidently displayed by her forgiveness to her severest enemies.—Alas ! my Lady, I have a cruel task to perform, for it is of the unfortunate Madame St. Clare I must write.—The prayers of all our Sisterhood are now united to relieve her poor soul.—Ah ! worthy Lady Melville, spite of the wrongs she did you, an account of her death must afford a heart like yours pain.—She fell a sacrifice to grief. At her first arrival here we exchanged friendship.—She recited to me all her errors, which I believe no woman could more sincerely repent of.—She painted your Ladyship's character in so very amiable a light, that I was almost angry with her for having been the means of almost all your misfortunes,—yet her repentance

tance and self-condemnation made me renounce the least inclination that way. For some months she, with exemplary piety, attended to the rules and duties of a monastic life, but an inward grief visibly preyed upon her spirits. Alas! all my efforts to eradicate it were in vain. Finding her health declining, two other Ladies and myself, who had a sincere friendship for her, endeavoured to persuade her, that the gloom of our holy retreat was prejudicial to her health; therefore she had better again enter into the world till it was re-established,—we should then with pleasure receive her again. In return to which she answered, the date of our lives was fixed by Heaven, consequently change of situation could not prolong it. A brother of one of these young Ladies, is a most accomplished young nobleman—he had seen

Madame St. Clare several times with his sister,—he fell a captive to her charms, and made his passion known to her. One day reading a letter of his before me, she blushed, and said, “Barfleur, my dear Barfleur, I must be candid with you;—my vanity I find is not extinct.---The attention of this young nobleman is pleasing to me, though I have not the least friendship or regard for him; a plain proof I am unfit again to trust myself in the world---I should perhaps again be overpowered by flattery, and absorbed in vanity; again launch into the follies of life, though I steered clear of pollution.—Alas! repentance only can obliterate my past crimes---let me still continue to implore mercy of offended Heaven.—Alas! alas!” said she weeping, “my revengeful disposition, and unfortunate attachment to Violetta, was the
main

main cause of the poor Marquis's death; I was accessory to it.----My peace of mind, never, oh, never can return, Barfleur. I loved him it is true, but not as a lover lament him; was he living, convinced as I am of my guilt, he should be erased from my memory with horror. But his untimely fate, alas! owing intirely to me, I must ever lament. Cut off, with all his imperfections on his head----'tis too much." Ah! Lady Melville, a heart possessed of the least sensibility, could not avoid being affected with such self-accusations. I wept with her.

Much about that period she received a letter from Lady Di Horton, alias *Florelo*, her present legal appellation; it runs as follows:

To

To Madame ST. CLARE.

MAY furies seize this fellow, and tear him piece-meal, for having thus duped me!—Florello I mean. Confinement makes me desperate without any hope of redress. I suffer as much torture as the deceitful priests persuade you souls do in purgatory. But why do I complain to you of misery?—to you, who, after all your avowed friendship, fled without endeavouring to relieve me. On you, St. Clare, I relied for aid---my liberty gained, I would have ensnared some fellow to maintain me in luxury. This horrible dungeon, which I scarce breathe in, is enough to drive any creature but myself into despair. Ravens, owls, and all the hideous train of obnoxious creatures, are continually flapping against my windows---the clock, like a dismal passing-

passing bell, is near five minutes sounding each stroke; and this wretch, at times, has the consummate assurance to say, this is the life he will continually inflict upon me, as a sacrifice to the manes of his dear Violetta. The fellow is handsome, but if he was to adore me to desperation, I could not endure solitude with him, or any one man, above a month. Sometimes he has moments of fondness, then I endeavour to allure him, but he is never off his guard at those periods. Confusion seize him! He says he loves me too well to trust me in the world; besides, he is determined I shall not dishonour him, which certainly would be the case, were I at liberty; that he always approved the caution of Spaniards in regard to their wives---Ladies of the *bon ton* should certainly then be very strictly guarded. A
vagrant!

vagrant ! how shall I execute revenge on him?---Clandon never writes to me, never endeavours to see me ; but it's the way of the world in general, and she is a vain proud fool---but for you, St. Clare,---you ! whom I really regarded, to serve me so intolerably, is abominable. Pusillanimous creature ! because fate struck off thy lover, must thou in the bloom of youth and beauty bid adieu to gallantry, and, instead of receiving adoration, pay it at the shrine of a mortal woman like thyself. It absolutely, St. Clare, is very laughable, even in idea, to behold thee, with bended knees, adoring the old bones of what is nominated some saint, though perhaps they belonged originally to some heinous sinner. Positively I always imagined you had more sense than to be guilty of idolatry, and adore old wood, stones, bones,

bones, and Nicholas himself knows what; a mere political bubble, child—for shame!—return to your senses, quit the old Abbess and her whining children of folly—rescue me from torture, St. Clare, and let us return to mirth and pleasure. But if you are absolutely determined to sacrifice yourself to the memory of Melville, may you be as miserable as you deserve to be in the sisterhood of ideots! in which case, that you write not to me is the earnest desire of your once affectionate friend,

DIANA —————

I will not add this Vagrant's name.
Oh! for revenge! revenge! Mere chance produced this opportunity of writing.



See here, Barfleur, said the unhappy St. Clare with a sigh, presenting me the
fore-

foregoing letter, what reason I have to blush at my choice of friends and former connexions. I will oblige Lady Di by my silence. My present ideas would dictate advice to her in my answer, which she would, enraged, destroy before half read. Alas! I fear it will require greater affliction, than she has yet experienced, to wean her from the pleasures of this life. This dear Lady then closed her speech with encomiums on your Ladyship's different conduct; and, as usual, burst into a flood of tears. She frequently mentioned to me her promise of writing to your Ladyship, but added, she was willing her year of probation should first pass, that, by taking the holy veil, she might have the pleasure of assuring you her repentance was sincere and lasting, which she knew would be acceptable news to so real a philanthropist as

VOL. III.

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your

your Ladyship. Alas! Madam, her health at last declined very fast, and she was for some time confined to her chamber; where she devoted her time to prayer and meditation. A few days before she expired, she attempted to write to you, but extreme weakness overpowered, and compelled her to lay aside her pen. "It is now too late for me to attempt writing to Lady Melville, my dear Barfleur," said she with a sigh; "the lamp of life but just glimmers—must rely on your friendship, and intreat, that, after my death, you will acquaint her of the manner of it, with a candid account of my behaviour since my arrival here,—tell her, that with my last expiring sigh, I wish her many long and happy years, and after death never ending felicity.—Inclose her Lady Di's letter, it will inform her of that infamous woman's

woman's present sentiments and situation, though alas ! it will give her pain. This, my dear Barfleur, is my last request ; I doubt not your performing it ;—repentance I hope has obliterated my guilt.—I feel a calm tranquility steal over my mind, and meet death with pleasure.”

Alas ! Madam, I saw this dear friend, for whom I had a sincere affection, breathe her last. She pressed my hand, and seemed to expire without pain. May every one who has been guilty of erroneous actions, as sincerely repent as this dear Lady, whose memory I shall ever regard. Her last request I most religiously observe ; if I have been prolix in my account, pardon it, Madam, it was my desire of fulfilling the wishes of the dead, and making her memory claim your pity. She has bestowed a small

donation on this Convent, and disposed of the remainder of her fortune among Monsieur St. Clare's relations.

I hope this account will arrive unmolested to your Ladyship's hands. A line, acknowledging the receipt of it, would afford unspeakable satisfaction to

Madam,

Your sincere Friend, tho' unknown,
And obedient Servant,

C. BARFLEUR.

*The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Lady
DUNCAN.*

Laurel-Grove.

THE two letters I inclose, my dear Harriot, are not calculated to raise my de-

depressed spirits. The unfortunate Madame St. Clare is at rest—peace to her ashes! I guess Mademoiselle Barfleur must be an amiable woman, from her pious and friendly attention to the penitent victim. I have acquiesced with her request of writing, to affirm her favour came safe to hand. Having wrote so lately, my dear friend, I have nothing to communicate. Remember me to your Lord, and tell his too agreeable friend I am well. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

A. MELVILLE.

Marchioness of MELVILLE to Mrs.

GORDON.

Laurel-Grove.

ALAS! my dear friend, it is with an affliction that baffles all description

I sit down to write. Philosophy, religion, or reason, can never master our grief when real misfortunes attack us.— It is for Lord Villars that my heart suffers this inexpressible anguish. Alas ! while I am writing, he may perhaps be numbered with the millions of those who are no more.—My sighs are wasted—my tears are shed in vain.

I was sitting reading to Lady N—— in her chamber, when her woman smiling informed me, that a very handsome young gentleman enquired for me, and desired to be admitted without delay to my presence. It excited my curiosity : I immediately repaired to the drawing room, where I found in the stranger, Lord Duncan.----He looked pale as death, and exhausted with fatigue.— How is Harriot ? demanded I in haste.—

Oh !

Oh! she is well, returned he—but my friend—Oh! Lady Melville, poor Villars will soon fall the victim of your barbarity. With tears he then informed me, that the amiable Lord Villars, some few days since, was seized with a violent fever at their house,—it increased, and the Doctors pronounced it was impossible he should live.—It was but at periods he retained his senses, in one of which he gained the truth of his situation, and lamented much that he could not see me before he expired. Lord Duncan therefore having an unexampled friendship for him, immediately set out for Laurel Grove, to intreat in the name of them all I would attend him thither, to receive the unfortunate Lord Villars' last sigh. How can I sustain such a trial, my dear Mrs. Gordon? My heart is ready to leave my bosom.----I cannot,

alas ! even in idea, undergo it and retain my senses.—He is the only man I ever loved.----I rejected him from the most delicate of objections---nay still must do the same, was I sure to gain his precious life by a contrary conduct. It is better to die innocent than live guilty, though only in one's own idea.—His virtues will procure him happiness in a better state, and perhaps merciful Heaven will compassionately shorten my date,—we shall be united in a happier region. But a thousand things now claim my attention.----In a few hours we set off for Myrtle Hall, and while we fly two hundred miles what a dreadful catastrophe may happen. Ah ! my dear, my amiable friend, pray for a speedy turn, and pity your truly distressed

A. MELVILLE.

Lady DUNCAN to Mrs. GORDON.

Myrtle Hall.

GOOD God! my dear Gordon, what will become of Adelaide and poor Charles when they come hither, and find the amiable Lord Villars expired before their arrival! I am absolutely stupefied with grief myself, and, to mend the matter, poor Archer has undergone successive faintings, which she is but just recovered from. Dr. C—— has given her a composing mixture, which I hope she will receive benefit from. The poor girl, it seemed, loved him to distraction, though she concealed it with such care, and strove to promote his happiness with Adelaide: but she is blessed with an amiable disposition; no wonder therefore she admired a man so formed

178 THE MUTABILITY OF

every way to please.—You know his merit, so I need not dwell on it.

I had informed his Lordship of Charles's departure and hopes of Lady Melville's return with him. He attended to what I said with pleasure; "Ah! Lady Duncan," said he, "such an idea recalls me almost to life—but, alas! perhaps she will arrive too late to receive my last sigh."

Three hours after, Nurse came and informed me he had expired without her knowledge—that she had not been absent from the bed half an hour, and yet he felt cold. Soon after an express came that Charles and my Adelaide would be here in a few hours. I am absolutely at a loss how to prepare them for the shocking news—I wish you was here, Gordon,

to advise me. Poor unfortunate Villars!
 —What shall I do?—I hear the carriage
 coming—The palpitation I am in is so
 great, that even my teeth chatter.—Hea-
 vens! what a scene I must pass through!
 —Alas! poor Adelaide, what must thou
 suffer!



I am retrieved from my agitated state
 a little by my mistake, dear Gordon. It
 was not those I expected, but our friend
 Mr. —, the surgeon. He was much
 affected at the melancholy event, as he
 had not heard of Lord Villars' illness.
 I recited the particulars of his disorder,
 as he seemed desirous to be informed of
 it, and how long it was since he expired.
 He often wished he had arrived sooner,
 and eagerly asked if Dr. C— was with
 him at the time he died. He was not, I

returned, but inspected him after Nurse's alarm, and declared him irretrievably gone; but that I had not had the body moved, as I expected Charles every moment, who would rather give necessary orders himself concerning his friend I imagined. With my leave, he said, he would take the last view of so valuable a nobleman. He is gone for that purpose, my dear Gordon. Poor Archer is still asleep. Oh! fie, these melancholy scenes are enough to affect one's spirits for a twelvemonth.—I must lay aside my pen.



Unspeakable joy intoxicates my senses, Gordon. The darling of the fair, the charming Villars, still lives. With this item you are undoubtedly on the rack to know particulars, and heartily rejoiced

joiced to find we did not bury the poor man alive.—Patience, Gordon, and I will gratify thee, ill-capacitated as I am for relating events with propriety. To begin, then :—You must know, when Mr. ——— was ascending the stairs, in slow paces, to the supposed chamber of Death's victim, he met Nurse with astonishment visible on her antique features : “ Lord ! Sir,” said she, “ come along—you are arrived in a pure moment, for as sure as day his Lordship is not dead—Come along !—I was just going to tell my Lady that I am sure a Doctor could bring him to life.”

While she was delivering her tale, Mr. ——— hurried to his Lordship's room, and found that there certainly was life in him. The whole house was presently alarmed ; all possible assistance was afforded

forded him; and, to shorten my wonderful story, in an hour's time, he returned to his senses again. Mr. — has prescribed medicines for him, and gives us hopes that he will soon recover, as it was a sudden turn of his fever, which was for his benefit. Mr. — says any of the Faculty might have known that he had life in him: besides, his jaw never fell. Had the simpleton of a nurse mentioned that circumstance, it would have struck me: but you know I am not fond of admiring dead people, therefore I never went into his chamber after I was told he was dead. If my dear Charles had been here, he would have been wiser, and poor Villars had assistance sooner. I have had the happy miracle revealed by degrees to Archer, who is greatly elevated at the news, and sits by me at this present writing. Alas! poor girl,

girl! she is in a pitiable situation; but I hope she will have the resolution to overcome her present sensation for the sick man, and we shall all be happy. But that dear creature Adelaide will not complete our felicity—She is absolutely very obstinate—What signifies her shewing herself to Villars, if she will not marry him? If Lady Mary would but make her exit at this critical juncture, how delightful it would be, Gordon! but don't you imagine, from the hint I have given, that I wish for such an event. No, no, Heaven forbid, giddy as I am, that I should wish for any person's death; that is a crime of too black a die, Gordon.



George is arrived, and informs me his master and Lady Melville will be
here

here in half an hour; therefore adieu, Gordon. You shall soon again hear from either Adelaide or your present correspondent,

HARRIOT DUNCAN.

The Marchioness of Melville to Mrs.
GORDON.

Myrtle-Hall.

THE severe feelings I underwent in my journey hither, my fatigue, my terror, and my apprehension of the worst affliction that could befall me, are more than I can describe: but the first view of our dear Harriot gave me hopes my fears were vain, and the amiable Lord Villars was out of danger. She informed me of every circumstance, and how keenly touched she was at our mutual friend's

friend's supposed dissolution. The recital affected me to the very heart. Want of attention might have been the means of our eternal loss. How fortunate it was Mr. — arrived to save a life so valuable! He now is able to sit in company as usual. What pleasure does it afford me to view his returning health! It was not till three days after my arrival here I was admitted to his chamber—then it had very near overpowered his weak frame. “Is it possible Lady Melville can have the goodness to travel so many miles to endeavour to save the life of a man whose hand she refuses?” said he. “Ah! Madam, pardon me; you are all virtue, and all benevolence; you are the dearest friend I have on earth—I must love, I must esteem you, while I exist. If there are in reality guardian spirits, as some have thought, my soul should

should still hover around you, and protect you from all misfortunes, till the hour of your dissolution, when I had liberty to conduct you to that blissful region your virtues so justly deserve to enjoy."—But the speeches of lovers, my dear Gordon, are too surfeiting—too adulatory to be repeated—yet we consider not how much our little merit is heightened when we listen to the man we love, because we are pleased at every word he utters, and do not give ourselves time to reflect it is flattery; nay, if we did, even flattery from him is pleasing. We would have him over-rate our merit, and be blind to our defects, by way of insuring his constancy. Yet to what purpose is all this, since I cannot compleat his happiness, and marry him? Lord Duncan, too, will not permit my departure for some time, lest his friend should relapse:

but

but I hope poor Lord Villars will be quite reinstated in a fortnight, and I in my liberty. Miss Archer is very much affected at having been thrown off her guard, and discovering her affection for the too agreeable Lord Villars. She promises to attend me to Melville-Park. Indeed, she is a very amiable girl, has refined sentiments, and a mild disposition. I hope she will soon be happier. I don't know any one so suitable as Mr. Clairville to her disposition. Were both their hearts at liberty, I think they would be mutually pleased, and make a very happy couple. This may not be impracticable. He has begged for permission to visit me. I shall be at London before I go to Melville-Park. She will be with me. I sincerely wish they may be struck with each other. But these sort of sensations will not be forced, I find, alas!

by

188 THE MUTABILITY OF

by experience—it makes me pity her the more. Harriot is desirous to add her kindest wishes, before I conclude myself your ever affectionate

A. MELVILLE.

Lady MELVILLE to Mrs. GORDON.

Myrtle-Hall.

LORD Villars not being even yet perfectly recovered, my dear friends here insist upon my lengthening my visit. Do I act right by complying with this request?—Perhaps it may delay his final recovery. They say, the reverse: on which presumption I submit. When the time of our separation arrives, how shall we both suffer? There is no remedy—We cannot, we must not, be united—But I trouble you too much, my dear
Mrs.

Mrs. Gordon, with these melancholy effusions of a disappointed heart, therefore will endeavour to relieve you.

We spend our time with tolerable cheerfulness at present, and have often the company of Sir Harry Fenlow and his lady, a very polite couple. Sir Harry does us the honour to admire us all in turn, and Lady Fenlow ogles with our gentlemen; but as, unluckily for her, they had not any inclination to intrigue with her lively Ladyship, she began to be out of humour with them for their stupidity. Fortunately Lord Hazard arrived in good time to recruit her spirits; nay, makes love to her before Sir Harry's face; to which he is politely deaf. In turn Sir Harry makes particular compliments to poor Miss Archer, who is out of all patience at his insolence:]

lence: but Harriot is properer to write on such subjects than me; besides, I still have a very great depression of spirits. St. Lou persecutes me with letters—I wish he would return to his native country—How could Lady Walters give him encouragement to torment me so! Let me hear from you soon, my dear friend, and believe me

Yours sincerely,

A. MELVILLE.

Lady DUNCAN to Mrs. GORDON.

Myrtle-Hall.

SIR Harry and Lady Fenlow's adherence to *bon ton* wounds the mind of my dear Adelaide, while I laugh heartily at their folly. I think it's absurd to do otherwise,

otherwise, as they chuse to make themselves ridiculous. In the country one must visit people one despises, or live alone. You must know, about two years ago this polite couple married for what they call love, Gordon, and retired to the country for three months, by which time they were heartily weary of each other. Their next determination was to take a tour through France and Italy, which compleated their imaginary politesse.—They returned the silly creatures we now find them.—Charming benefit and improvement they gained, really. Sir Harry and Lord Hazard are professed friends, and gamblers; the former has lost several thousand pounds lately. The indulgence of this said passion for gaming is a dreadful practice—In a few moments what numbers are rendered beggars by it?—Noble families ruined!—It makes

192 THE MUTABILITY OF

makes them guilty of the meanest actions, and too frequently ends in suicide.—Heavens! Gordon, if I am not moralizing; I believe I must enlist under Lady Fenlow's banner, or I shall dwindle into a stupid humdrum matron indeed—But we are going to dinner there, so adieu!



Sad doings, Gordon!—What misfortunes arise from people's folly!—I was rather premature in my reflections—But for the event:

Lady Fenlow was alone in the drawing-room when we arrived: "These men," said she, "are continually at dice—they have been at it in Hazard's dressing-room all the morning—Surely, ladies, your company will allure them from it."

it." She then ordered a servant to inform them we were come.

In about half an hour's time Sir Harry rushed into the room, pale as ashes, with his hair loose, and in the greatest agitation imaginable. He looked at us with a wildness that surpassed all description. Lord Hazard soon followed him, dressed.

"Dear Fenlow," said the latter, "don't be so abominably rude to the company because you have lost a few corianders—These fair ladies claim your attention."

"Perdition to my cursed fortune—you—and the whole world!" said he—"Is this a time to talk of gallantry?—Lady Fenlow, I'm undone—Lord Hazard has won my whole fortune."

“Lord! Sir Harry,” said she, coolly,
“What is to become of me?—My
Lord, will you take me in the bargain?”

A rapturous speech was then uttered
by his Lordship, and an agreement to
her request.

“Well, then, positively you shall have
me,” said she.—“Sir Harry, my Lord
will get you a commission, I’m sure, by
my desire, and you may retrieve your
fortune in America.”

We all imagined she was not bent on
so infamous a conduct, but it proved
too true; she certainly had intended to
go off with him before this event hap-
pened.

Sir Harry was almost distracted at his
own

own folly, but under no concern for Lady Fenlow's deserting him.

Things being in such confusion, we were obliged to return home to dinner; but, before we came away, Lord Villars and Duncan strove to make Sir Harry more composed, but that was impossible. He has only two hundred a year left to subsist on, which I almost think is more than he deserves. I will not begin moralizing again, though there is sufficient room for it here. Poor Adelaide and Archer sit sighing for Sir Harry, though they acknowledge by his adventuring he deserved such a misfortune. As to her, she is one of the most infamous of women.

I am highly delighted, my dear Gordon, with part of a French author's

works* I have just been reading—He gives an account of the English, and paints the disposition of our men I think very properly (laying aside a few individuals we know). Then he compliments our sex so, that he deserves to have a monument raised to his memory. I think it runs thus in English:

——“HAPPY as the French esteem themselves in the company of women, as much the English dread it: at least, if they are amorous, they only find in the fair what gratifies their passion, seldom what engages their mind. They prefer the pleasure of drinking the healths of beauties in a tavern to that of entertaining them in a circle—treat them as a different sort of being as well as sex—

* *Lettres d'une François.*

and,

and, in general, think them only fit to dissipate their chagrin, and sweeten the fatigue of business. Those met with at Paris endeavour to justify their countrymen by saying women in England are not so entertaining as in France; but, supposing that to be the case, is it not the fault of the men? If we find more pleasure in the conversation of French women, it is not because they have in reality more wit, but they display it more.

“ The presence of a man in England creates taciturnity in a whole circle of females.

“ At Paris, a *petit maitre* scarce arrived to manhood suffices a dozen of our belles at a time to move that agreeable instrument of speech we call *tongue*. But we must neither commend or blame

the English ladies for their taciturnity, as their silence is occasioned by the embarrassment they find in company. This embarrassment proceeds only from their being unaccustomed to it. It is less their fault than our sex's, who neglect them, and who, by the dangerous habit of drinking, destroy all refined sentiments, with perhaps the desire of pleasing. Those who give themselves up so much to the fatal custom of drinking are not made for the conversation of women—Seldom are they amorous—they are only libertines.

“ The English men lose much pleasure by living so little with a sex who have their share of graces from Nature, whose society has always charms, and a peculiar sweetness in their conversation which we find not in our own sex.

“ Converſing

“ Conversing with women softens and polishes the manners ; by the habit of endeavouring to please we contract a tone equally agreeable to both sexes. Men with each other are too supine ; their conversation languishes, or turns to a warm dispute : for to gain applause, they strive for a superiority, and are mutually offended ; neither will acknowledge being in the wrong ; and it finishes by hating him they could not vanquish.

“ With women we take a surer method of gaining esteem—We study to please them, and we succeed. It is the sensation one sex naturally has for the other which inspires the insinuating tone and affecting manner that consecrate true politeness ; which habit we cannot contract but by the company of women. The custom of the sexes living in this

manner is truly estimable, and constitutes the delight and happiness of our lives.

“ You may easily perceive, by the air as well as manner of dress, these people are removed from the conversation of the fair sex. It is from this great negligence that the English have a *je ne sçai quoi* of fierceness which strikes us so.

“ Those who go to Paris with the advantage of speaking our language with ease astonish us always with their embarrassed air, which they seldom quit. The cause is evident. They no sooner quit the university than their first years are passed at London in frequenting coffee-houses and taverns, those places so pernicious to youth, which they cannot frequent without hurting their sentiments.

“ We

“ We perceive others studying the manners of strange countries before they are acquainted with their own. This is another inconvenience. We should not travel but in search of knowledge. Those who have no idea of it are not calculated to find it. Most of the tutors these young men are consigned to are not themselves fit for travelling. They bring with them from college that pernicious custom and vice of smoaking and drinking. How can they instruct their pupils in a politeness they are unacquainted with?”——

I am hastily called from abusing my own dear countrymen, and, as the post will soon be going off, my dear Gordon, must bid you adieu!

Yours sincerely,

H. DUNCAN.

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The

The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Mrs.
GORDON.

Myrtle-Hall.

MY dear Harriot has, I find, informed you of Sir Harry Fenlow's folly, and his Lady's most unparalleled assurance—Infamous woman! to desert her husband at such a period, even though he brought his misfortune on himself by his own indiscretion. If he had possessed the least regard for her, what additional affliction must it have caused him?—But undoubtedly she was become an object of disgust—The name of *wife* to so fine a gentleman was enough to cause hatred—His pursuit was variety in his pleasures; the common vice of the times.

Lord Villars and Lord Duncan sent
the

the next day to enquire after his health. The servant informed us Lady Fenlow went off with Lord Hazard after dinner. The latter told Sir Harry he was welcome to remain there four or five months if he chose it, till he could settle himself. What a cruel mortification, my dear friend, to be told so!—A house which in the morning was his own! The servant said Sir Harry was like a distracted man, and continued so.

Lord Villars was shocked at his misfortune, and went to condole with him, and offer his service or interest; but he would not listen to his Lordship, and intreated to be left alone.

Yesterday, however, he packed up his cloaths, and took his last leave of a place that might still have been his own but

for his unconquerable passion for gaming. What distracting sensations must he carry with him?—doubly mortifying to a man so absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure. Lady Fenlow will, likewise, in turn, become a prey to despair—Lord Hazard's licentious passion will soon expire—She will, perhaps, be distressed even for subsistence.—Such is the misery entailed on vice commonly in this world!—An indulgence of irregular passions reduces us to misery, poverty, and indigence.

Next week, my dear Mrs. Gordon, I set out for Melville-Park, and hope that you will soon be able to join me, for I shall stand much in need of your company. Adieu! adieu!

A. MELVILLE.

The

*The Marchioness of MELVILLE to Mrs.
GORDON.*

Myrtle-Hall.

I HAVE surprising news for my amiable friend—news that will give your affectionate heart more pleasure than it has received a long time, as your amiable disposition makes you “tremblingly alive all o’er” to the misfortunes and happiness of your friends. Harriot would have me keep you in suspense, to set your curiosity still more afloat, and not inform you what it is in this letter; but I cannot agree to such an unfeeling practice. Lady Mary —— has been long numbered with the dead. I do not exult over her ashes—May they rest in peace!—But it would be affectation to lament her, tho’ it would be barbarous to triumph—Such
a con-

a conduct would seem chargeable with the guilt of dissimulation. No, my dear friend, I will candidly confess the thoughts of being united to Lord Villars gives me great pleasure—He is a man of such uncommon merit—so unlike the vulgar rake—I must be happy with him. It is to Mr. Clairville I am indebted for the above information. He is acquainted with Capt. F——, who some time since arrived in England, and has paid his addresses to Lady Emma. Her Ladyship was too much engaged to attend to him. This touched him sensibly. The news of Lord Villars' dangerous illness made her still more reserved to the Captain, being in the greatest anxiety concerning his life. Capt. F—— observed it, and complained to Mr. Clairville, who recited the common report which prevailed that Lord Villars' disorder proceeded from his
esteem

esteem for me, who had refused him on account of Lady Mary's being alive, &c. so that he need not be under any apprehension that Lord Villars would ever transfer his affection to Lady Emma, or any other woman. Clairville further said, he sincerely wished to see me united to his Lordship, (since I had refused him,) as he hoped it would fix my happiness, which would give him inexpressible pleasure—That he really was sorry, extremely sorry, I had taken so uncommon a resolution to disappoint his friend's felicity.

Captain F—— attended to him with the greatest surprise—"Is it possible?" he cried—"Does Lady Melville actually reject Lord Villars for the cause you mention?" Mr. Clairville assured him it was so.

: He

He paused—then taking Mr. Clairville's hand with a changed countenance,—“ Clairville, said he, I injured Lord Villars ; but I was likewise the means of releasing him from an infamous woman. Our acquaintance was of a very short date before his Lordship procured a divorce. Novelty was the charm. She proposed going to France after she was at liberty, but altered her mind and determined to go incog. under a feigned name to ——shire ; that she might after a few weeks go from thence to Calais, and, unknown, quit England, not chusing her friends should have any knowledge whither she was gone. Part of her plan was executed.—We went to ——shire, and both took her maiden appellation, passing for man and wife. A fortnight after our being here she fell ill—grew worse, and I called in
proper

proper aid; but she soon was past all human assistance. She was not in the least affected with the near prospect of her dissolution; neither, I believe, did she in reality perceive her danger, for she seemed inclined to intrigue with the Doctor who attended her. About three hours, however, before she expired, she said she felt herself much worse, and insisted upon immediately making her will.—A lawyer came. She bequeathed me her whole fortune, which was four thousand pounds:—she had it with her in notes and money, which she intended to fix in the funds abroad. This will being compleated, and every one withdrawn, she requested as a favour in return for her love, that, if she expired, I would conceal her death from Lord Villars, and the world in general, that they might not triumph over her memory,

ry, and exulting say, Vengeance had overtaken her ;—further, that I would take a tour somewhere out of England, and when I returned back, say I had left her abroad. “ This, my dear F——,” concluded she, “ is all I desire of you ; a small request, and one with which I hope you will comply.— Adieu, F——,” said she, “ I find myself sleepy, send Nurse hither.” I retired. Nurse came an hour after and informed me, her Mistress’s sleepiness was succeeded by great agonies ; that she seemed to have a great horror upon her, and could not speak intelligibly. Disagreeable as such a scene was, I determined to attend her, as perhaps she might revoke her last request, and wish to have her will cancelled. I held the will in my hand, and asked her if I should destroy it ? She shook her head, and I could just distinguish she said, “ No ;”
but

but her seeming agonies were past description. I then sent the Nurse out, and asked her if she still desired I would conceal her death? She answered very plain, "Yes, yes," and nodded her head. Soon after she fell into strong convulsions, and, as I was quitting the room, expired.

"Gay as I then was," said he to Mr. Clairville, "the manner of her death shocked me. I soon after had her privately interred at ——— church, left the place, and pursued my former pleasures. Every one imagined we quitted England together, and I did not contradict the report in my answers to my friends letters, strictly adhering to Lady Mary's last request: but the present occasion, I think, justifies me; by concealing it I should render two amiable people

people wretched. Lord Villars's character claims the greatest respect, Clairville. I should be proud to acquaint him every obstacle to his union with Lady Melville was removed; but after what has passed I have not the assurance to appear before him.—Do you therefore inform him of the happy news, and if Lady Melville requires a more satisfactory account of Lady Mary's death, it is only writing to Mr. W——, the attorney, at ——, who will assure her of his attending us at the time of her last illness; nay, indeed, the will which I now have in my possession is sufficient proof; I should imagine that will afford her Ladyship sufficient satisfaction."

These, my dear Mrs. Gordon, are the particulars of Mr. Clairville's account in a letter to Lord Duncan.

Harriot,

Harriot, overpowered with joy, after having read the letter, ran into the room and saluted us all round. Lord Villars in raillery returned her thanks for the honour she had done him, when she cried, "Sit down, good folks, and let me read the happy recital; be sure, though, you don't lose your senses with joy, Villars." She then with an audible voice read the letter, which you may be certain affected me not a little in several respects. Poor Lady Mary's inconsiderate end made a small impression on his Lordship,—he sighed at her frailty, but rising joy soon succeeded it. He demanded if I would still persist in refusing him, as he was *now*, according to my own way of thinking, at liberty. In return to which I answered, Seeing the will would convince me. I therefore wrote a line to Mr. Clairville, making an apology for my
want

want of faith, and desiring my compliments to Captain F——, informing him, if it was not inconvenient and improper, I should be glad he would permit my friend, Mr. Probus, to inspect into it. My request was granted, and I was convinced. Still farther to satisfy me, Lord Villars wrote to the person who made the will,—likewise to the Doctor who attended her, &c. The answers were all satisfactory according to Captain F——'s account.—They called her Mrs. ———.

No impediment therefore remaining, my dear Gordon, I have no plea to postpone our marriage. Lady Mary has been dead two years; no mourning is necessary for her in such a case. Lord Villars's spirits are beyond what I ever saw them. No woman can have a prospect

pect of greater earthly happiness than I have, my amiable friend. Bountiful Heaven amply rewards all my past sufferings.—Tomorrow Miss Archer sets off for London, with Lord Villars and myself. Harriot and Lord Duncan are soon to follow, while we prepare for our sacred engagement. Miss Archer seems with great pleasure to anticipate our happiness; and is delighted with the character of Clairville: we all flatter ourselves they will be charmed with each other. I am sure they would not be unhappy in marriage, if they would venture, their dispositions are so perfectly amiable.



We have just received a melancholy account of the infamous Nugent.—Pursuing his gallantry in Ireland, he insulted

216 THE MUTABILITY OF

sulted a married Lady of family—her brother demanded satisfaction; they met; Nugent was mortally wounded, and survived but a few hours. The gentleman was obliged to abscond, and the poor Lady is very unhappy on account of her brother. What evils continually spring from a spirit of unlicensed gallantry, and what they term fashionable intrigue. Void of any sense of religion, they deliver themselves up to the embraces of Vice. Harriot drags me from you, my amiable friend, and tells me Lord Villars is impatient at my long absence—positively I shall not scribble any more—she will be obeyed, therefore, my dear friend, I must bid you adieu. Happiness attend you is the sincere wish of,

Your affectionate

A. MELVILLE.

From

From the Same to the Same.

Grosvenor-Square.

I HAVE had the honour of a most extraordinary visit from a person I little expected. You will be surprized when I inform you it was Lady Clandon. I happened to be alone when she came.

She entered with her usual gay air—
 “ Ah! my dear Lady Melville, I am charmed to see you, after such an age of absence—I came, out of pure friendship, to dissuade you from marrying Villars—for Heaven’s sake don’t think of it—Mistress of yourself, and so fine a fortune, don’t be so mad as to barter them for a despotic sullen tyrant—He is so saturnine a creature—Oh! horrible to think on!—Now, if you really are

VOL. III.

L

deter-

determined to become a slave, why there is Lord M——, a sprightly fellow, who will not interfere in your conduct—I came purely out of friendship, to advise you—He certainly is the most worthy object.”

“ I must beg, Lady Clandon, you will be silent on a subject that does not concern you,” returned I.

“ It certainly does not, Melville,” answered she; “ but then friendship urges : besides, I really fear Lord M—— will go distracted if you marry Villars. What signifies a handsome phiz ?—Pho !—that you will soon be weary of. I remember reading a story very apropos in some old French book, but what book I cannot burthen my memory with—I swear it’s not my own invention—I thought it clever—I will tell it you—’Tis apropos :”

‘ A young gentleman bespoke of a certain painter a picture of Hymen—I will have it attended by the Graces, said this passionate lover—Remember that Hymen must be represented more beautiful than Adonis—You must put in his hand a torch brighter than Cupid’s---In fine, make a trial of your skill, and I will pay you for it according to its goodness. The painter, knowing his liberality, endeavoured to please him, and brought home the picture the night before the gentleman’s marriage. The young lover was not satisfied---There wants in this figure, said he, a certain gay air---some *agremens*---certain charms---In short, it answers not the idea I have conceived of Hymen---You have made him but moderately beautiful---you shall be but moderately paid.

‘ The painter had a great deal of ready wit, as well as genius for painting; he therefore immediately coincided with the gentleman’s opinion. You have reason not to be contented with my picture, said he; the face is not yet dry---To speak freely, I lay my colours on in such a manner, that my pictures appear but indifferent when first finished. I will bring this picture again in a few months, and you shall pay me for it according to its beauty. I am sure it will appear quite another thing. Adieu! Sir; I am not distressed for money.

‘ The painter took back his work. Our young lover was married next morning. Several months elapsed without the painter’s appearing. At last he brought the picture. The bridegroom was surprised to see it. You have promised well,

well, said he---How time has improved your picture!---What a difference!---I scarce know it!---I admire what effect time has upon these colours!---I admire still more your ingenuity!---Nevertheless, it cannot prevent my telling you the countenance is too gay---the eyes a little too sprightly---They should not be so bright as those of the God of Love---Hymen should appear graver---Besides, the attitude of your figure is too airy---a little too free---and you have given it an air of wantonness, which the character should not have---It is not the Hymen I want after all.

‘ Very well, Sir, said the painter; what I foresaw is come to pass---Hymen is now less beautiful in your idea than in my picture. It was quite the contrary three months ago. It is not my pic-

ture, but your idea is changed. You was a lover before---now you are a husband.

‘ I understand you, said the gentleman---Lay it down---From what you say I find the picture is according to my own fancy---It is just you should be paid according to your skill---There is a purse which contains double what you could hope for---Take it, Sir, and leave me the picture.

‘ No, Sir, replied the painter---No, I will not leave it---I will give you another, which shall please both lovers and married men---it shall open the eyes of all painters. Accordingly, he painted another, which he finished with a great deal of art. Hymen, viewed at a distance, seemed quite charming; but
near,

near, quite otherwise. This picture was placed in a superb gallery, in a sort of alcove: to approach this alcove, a splendid glittering place charmed the beholder's eyes; but when he arrived there ---adieu all charms.'

" Thus ends my story, dear Melville ---It is really true enough---Marry for love, and you'll surely be miserable---jealous of each other---and, oh! what horrible gloomy *tete à tetes* will ensue!"

" My resolution is fixed, Lady Clandon," returned I; " I desire no other happiness than the indulgence of my husband's company. Domestic happiness is the ambition of Lord Villars and myself, and I doubt not experiencing it. I am sorry to affront any person who has once treated me with civility---but, as

our dispositions are so different, and your Ladyship continues so gay, I must inform you, Madam, that my doors will not be open to you again," said I, rising.

"Surely, Melville," returned she, "you are not in earnest---you cannot have the effrontery to turn me out of your house. What, I suppose you have heard of my innocent flirtation with Lord M--- are jealous---and in a fit of despair will marry Villars---Aye, certainly the case---You'll repent it---depend on what I say---you will repent it. ---Mere friendship brought me, and I have been abused for it---Mighty civil, indeed, my Lady Marchioness!---Melville should have learnt you politeness and decorum before he gave you a title---Poor ignorant creature!" said she, rising, and walking up and down the room in a violent rage.

I was almost afraid of her, and rung the bell while she was speaking, when my servant came; "Call up Lady Clandon's carriage," said I, looking at her with haughtiness.

"Revenge shall ensue—vulgar, ill-bred creature!" said she. "I will not go—No—I will stay to torment thee."

Luckily Lord Duncan entered. He saw me pale, and her in a rage. "Confusion!" said he, "What is the matter, dear Lady Melville?"

"Dear Lady Melville!—Oh! then your pious Ladyship is not averse to intrigue, though you can condemn me," said she, in a rage, looking at me—
 "But I will be politer than your insolence deserves—I will leave you to enjoy
 your

your lover." So saying, she curtesy'd scornfully, and took herself away.

"What mad-woman is this?" said his Lordship, as she departed, for he did not recollect her.

I informed him who she was, and what had passed between us. He commended me for treating her as she deserved, being a woman of so loose a character, that it was improper to visit or have any connection with her. But it is high time to conclude. We are exceeding busy in preparations for our solemn engagement. Harriot will inform you, my dear friend, when it is compleated. Assure yourself I shall always be your affectionate

A. MELVILLE.

Lady

Lady DUNCAN to Mrs. GORDON.

Melville-Park.

NEVER was a set of mortals happier than we are here, Gordon. The moment after Adelaide was irrevocably united to Lord Villars, we posted hither, where love and friendship divide our hours. The dear creature has received congratulations from all her friends on the occasion. Villars is such an amiable character, they could not object against him. You perceive, my dear Gordon, by this couple of lovers, that virtue is sometimes rewarded even in this world, where your thinking people will allow only wickedness and deceit to be met with. For my part, I cannot grant it so—Good and evil are certainly blended—Many characters are worthy of immortal

mortal fame, some meet with a reward here, some not : but I am a creature of too volatile a mold for moralizing—that business I leave to you and Adelaide.—What an admirable philosophical pair will she and Villars make,—you will compleat the trio, and in time perhaps, when my hairs are silvered over with age, I may improve by your lectures, with a young brood around us. It will then be time to think.

Poor Archer's cheerfulness is affected--- I often find her weeping when alone.--- Lord Villars still adheres to her heart, but she will be compelled soon to go with her father to Scotland ; new objects, I hope, will restore her tranquillity, though, alas ! a sincere love is hard to be eradicated. Clairville seems to have a friendship commencing for her,
she

she allows his merit,----but as yet they both appear distant from the union we hoped for. Her sister informs her, Lady Emma has peremptorily refused Captain F——, and still sighs out Villars' name; all men are indifferent to her but him, therefore she is determined to gratify her vanity and ambition. The old Marquis of —— has renewed his addresses, and Flora Archer thinks she will accept him. Lady Clandon pursues her intrigues, which her Lord entirely overlooks. Adelaide has received a very affectionate letter from Mr. Villars. She and my Lord intend paying him a visit in a few months. I have news to inform you of, which escaped my memory in my two last epistles. Fluellen, alias Burton, is numbered with the dead. Mrs. Harpur accused her of some misconduct, at which she

flew

flew into a violent passion,---her rage continued,---and a few hours after she fell into a fit which she expired in. The Doctors imagined it proceeded from her perturbation of spirits : a good warning, Gordon, for us to calm our passions.

To make amends for this tragic account, I will inform you that Adelaide is in daily expectation of seeing her friend, Lady Connor. Now is your wit at work to know who this Lady Connor can be. I will relieve you, my dear creature. She was the amiable Madam Hermon, of whom our friend spoke so favourably. Sir Charles Connor is no other than the Mr. Smith who offered Adelaide his friendship at Paris, and had very near fought a duel with Melville for treating her so unworthily. He at that time paid his addressee to his present
Lady,

Lady, and had heard her often commend our friend, which increased his esteem, and made him interest himself in her happiness. Monsieur Hermond died some time after. The title, in the interim, fell to Sir Charles, and at a proper time, the widow married him. They came to England, when she directly enquired for Lady Melville, (now Villars,) and wrote to her.—Adelaide was sincerely rejoiced to hear from her, and is promised a visit, when we shall have an additional pleasure.

Does your Cousin never intend to regain her health, that we may have you once more among us? Positively, Gordon, it is quite unreasonable for her to confine you so long, and deprive you of congratulating and rejoicing personally with

232 THE MUTABILITY OF

with your friend, on so happy an event
as her marriage with Villars. Make
your escape, I charge you, and come to
receive the friendly embraces of

Your

HARRIOT DUNCAN.

F I N I S.

